



EARLY INDIAN TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Edited by
D. C. Sircar



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UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA
1972



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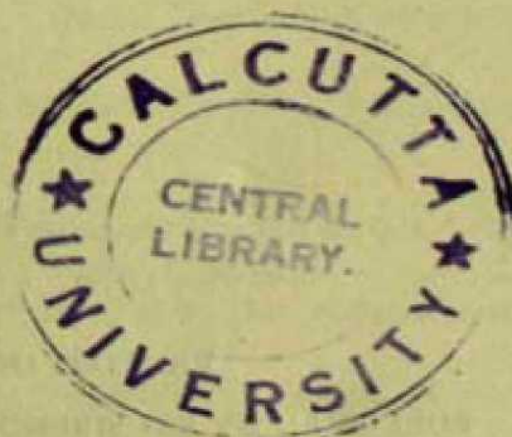


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Edited by

D. C. SIRCAR

*Carmichael Professor and Head of the Department of
Ancient Indian History and Culture,
University of Calcutta.*



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PREFACE

The eighth annual series of two days' inter-university seminars was held at our Centre of Advanced Study in February, 1972, on (1) Early Indian Trade and Industry, and (2) Religion and Culture of the Jains. The proceedings of the first day's seminar on Early Indian Trade and Industry, together with papers presented on the occasion, are now placed in the hands of the students of ancient Indian history.

The proceedings have been drawn up, as usual, on the notes submitted by the Reporters. The papers, edited without changing the authors' ideas as far as possible, have been roughly arranged on a chronological basis. The editing work had to be done in a hurry because of my impending retirement on the 31st July, 1972 ; but still I have tried to do my best within the short time at my disposal.

The index of this volume has been prepared by Sm. K. Bajpeyi, Junior Research Fellow at the Centre.

Centre of Advanced Study, Dept. of
Ancient Indian History and Culture,
Calcutta University, 51/2, Hazra Road,
Calcutta-19, June 27, 1972.

D. C. SIRCAR
Director



Proceedings of the Seminar

First Day

Date : 24th February, 1972

Time : 10-30 A.M. to 1 P.M. and 2 P.M. to 5 P.M.

Subject : Early Indian Trade and Industry

Place : Lecture Hall, Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University.

Chairman : PROF. D. C. SIRCAR, Calcutta University

Participants besides the Chairman :

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. DR. B. SRIVASTAVA | Banaras Hindu University,
Varanasi |
| 2. DR. L. B. KENY | Bombay University |
| 3. DR. G. B. UPRETI | Delhi University |
| 4. SM. S. SENGUPTA | Do. |
| 5. DR. N. N. ACHARYA | Gauhati University |
| 6. DR. SM. B. LAHIRI | Jadavpur University |
| 7. DR. SM. R. CHAMPAKALAKSHMI | Madras University |
| 8. DR. O. P. VERMA | Nagpur University |
| 9. DR. A. M. SHASTRI | Do. |
| 10. DR. P. K. BHATTACHARYA | North Bengal University,
Rammohannagar |
| 11. DR. SM. S. M. DEVI | Patna University |
| 12. SRI A. K. CHAKRAVARTI | Govt. Sanskrit College,
Calcutta |
| 13. DR. S. R. DAS | Calcutta University |
| 14. DR. A. N. LAHIRI | Do. |
| 15. DR. A. K. CHATTERJEE | Centre of Advanced Study
in AIHC, Calcutta
University |

and others.

Reporters : DR. SM. J. MAITRA
SM. K. BAJPEYI

Morning Session

The Seminar started at 10-30 A.M. when Prof. D. C. Sircar extended welcome to all the scholars assembled, especially to the representatives of Universities other than Calcutta. He requested the scholars representing the various Universities to forgive any lapses on the part of the organisers of the seminars.

Prof. Sircar then requested Dr. O. P. Verma to read his paper entitled 'Organisation and Functions of Some South Indian Guilds'. Before introducing the subject of the paper, Dr. Verma wanted the opinion of the house, particularly of Prof. Sircar, in respect of a trend in Indian historical research of the present day. He referred to the tendency to offer socialistic interpretation of evidences and to the preference of generalisations. Prof. Sircar replied that the socialistic approach to historical problems is a bias not worthy of a true historian while those who prefer generalisations appear to shut their eyes to evidences against their views. Dr. A. M. Shastri agreed with Prof. Sircar and observed that generalisation is difficult for those who have command over the details of available evidences.

In his paper, Dr. Verma described two types of guilds, viz. craft guilds and merchants' guilds. The former consisted of artisans who followed the same vocation and the latter comprised merchants who traded in the commodities produced by the former. He said that the guilds played a significant role in the development of South Indian trade and industry in the medieval period. Prof. Sircar observed that, though the functions and working of the guilds are well known, still the study of the guilds of a particular area is interesting. He also referred to the expression '500 Svāmis' mentioned by Dr. Verma and pointed out that it may not have really meant the said number. A similar expression is often found in the early Buddhist literature, in which, e.g., the Buddha is generally described as followed by 500 monks. According to Prof. Sircar,

500 here means merely a large number. Dr. Verma thought that the organisation was big, but the number was traditional. Prof. Sircar referred to the two weavers' guilds at the ancient city of Govardhana (Nasik) and considered it interesting that even members of the same professional community of a particular locality were not organised into a single guild. Sri A. K. Chakravarti thought that it was due to their economic backwardness; but Prof. Sircar did not agree with him. Prof. Sircar further observed that in our ancient literature guilds are found to be formed by the people of various professions, even dacoits having their own guilds. Dr. A.N. Lahiri thought that they organised themselves for the benefit of their own professions. Sri R. K. Bhattacharya observed that the Rathakāras mentioned as Brāhmaṇas by Dr. Verma were not given this status in the Smṛti literature. Prof. Sircar pointed out that, like the Vaidyas of Bengal, the Rathakāras (carpenters and a few other communities) of South India, especially of Andhra Pradesh, claim to be better Brāhmaṇas than the Brāhmaṇas themselves.

Dr. N. N. Acharya then read his paper entitled 'The Trade-routes and Means of Transport in Ancient India, with special reference to Assam'. He discussed the problem of communication as referred to in the Jātakas, the *Arthaśāstra* and the accounts of the Greek and Chinese travellers. Prof. D. C. Sircar disagreed with some of the points raised by Dr. Acharya. He said that Assam was no part of the Maurya empire. Aśoka is known from Buddhist traditions to have founded numerous monasteries throughout his kingdom and, in the seventh century, Hiuen-tsang found some of them in Bengal and in other parts of India, but not a single one of them in Assam. Dr. Acharya said that some parts of North Bengal were included in Assam, and Buddhism flourished there during Aśoka's time. Prof. Sircar observed that there was no proof in support of such views and, on the other hand, North Bengal, called Puṇḍravardhana, was separated from Assam, called Prāgjyotiṣa or Kāmarūpa, by the river Karatoyā. Dr. A. M. Shastri thought that the inclusion of Assam in Aśoka's

empire cannot be regarded as improbable. Prof. Sircar, however, drew attention to the fact that Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, the earlier names of Assam, do not occur in Indian works earlier than the epics. Sri R. K. Bhattacharya thought that there was a trade route between Assam and China. Prof. Sircar said that, in early literature, the name Cina was applied to Tibet and Mahācina to China. As regards the name of the city of Hārūpṣvara mentioned by Dr. Acharya, Prof. Sircar said that it was a wrong reading for *Haḍapeśvara* while 'the Lauhitya sea' is the Brahmaputra and not its junction with the Bay of Bengal.

Sri A. K. Chakravarti next read his paper entitled 'The Role of Fu-nan in the Early Sino-Indian Maritime Trade'. Dr. P. K. Bhattacharya wanted to know whether there was any conflict between the Colas and China. Prof. Sircar replied that there was really no evidence and observed that some aspects of the problem discussed by Sri Chakravarti are not quite clear. He referred to the mention of 'the Land of Gold', also known from Indian literature, and 'Iabadiu', standing for Sanskrit *Yava-dvīpa* (Barley Island) in Ptolemy's Geography, which suggest trade relations between the land beyond the Bay of Bengal and India and apparently also the Graeco-Roman world. Sri Chakravarti, however, thought that Ptolemy vaguely referred to some trade centres, while the *Periplus* had even vaguer knowledge of China and its route. Dr. B. Srivastava said that the evidence of Ptolemy's Geography is confirmed by later texts like the *Mahāniddesa* and *Kathāsaritsāgara*.

Dr. Sm. Sushil Malti Devi read her paper dealing with the significant part played by women in the weaving industry in ancient India. Prof. D. C. Sircar opined that, even now in almost all parts of India, women are engaged in the textile industry, though it is difficult to prove that the female textile workers of ancient India succeeded in organising their own guilds. Sri R. K. Bhattacharya referred to *Kāruṣilpinī* occurring in the *Sāhityadarpaṇa*.

Dr. Sm. B. Lahiri then read her paper entitled 'Guilds in Ancient India and the Evidence of Coins'. She pointed out that the institution of guilds meaning the corporate bodies of traders, merchants and artisans are very old in India. Dr. Sm. Lahiri said that these organisations are indicated by various terms on old coins as well as in literary and epigraphic records. Prof. Sircar pointed out that *vārttā* was the profession of the Vaiśyas and *śāstra* was that of the Kṣatriyas, so that the expression *vārttā-śāstr-opajivin* as mentioned by Kauṭilya was not a guild of soldiers, but comprised different professionals. Dr. Sm. Lahiri doubted whether the merchants and soldiers of Kamboja and Surāṣṭra were organised in the same guilds. Dr. A.M. Shastri pointed out that guilds often had soldiers for the protection of their goods, so that the two professions were not unrelated. Prof. Sircar observed that *Nigama-sabhā*, as referred to by Dr. Sm. Lahiri, was a kind of town-council which had some power over the guilds. Sri A. K. Chakravarti wanted to know whether the salary of the *Śreṇimukhya* was paid by the State. Dr. S. K. Mitra opined that, in the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Śreṇimukhya* is mentioned as a State official. Prof. Sircar thought that the *Nagaraśreṣṭhin*, who was the Chairman of a board of administration like the modern Pañcāyat Board, may also have been a similar State official. Dr. Mitra thought that he was an honorary official; but Prof. Sircar did not think that he could carry on his work without any kind of remuneration. Prof. Sircar mentioned how the members of a weavers' guild in Lāṭa settled at Daśapura and how some of them continued to practise their old profession while others adopted various other professions and pointed out how difficult it is to prove whether the guild at Daśapura comprised only the weavers or even those who changed their profession. Dr. A. M. Shastri thought that, in such cases, the guild must have comprised only those people who remained in the old profession. Dr. S. Bandyopadhyay and Dr. Sm. P. Niyogi thought that the numismatic aspect of Dr. Sm. Lahiri's paper had been neglected in the discussion. Dr. Bandyopadhyay

suggested that Sm. Lahiri could have mentioned, along with the *Gāndhika-śreṇī*, also the *Pārṇika-śreṇī* which is found in a Nāgārjunikoṇḍa inscription and has been interpreted as a guild of the growers or sellers of betel leaves. Dr. A.M. Shastri observed that, if *nigama* was larger than a town, the expression *pañca-nigama* would be difficult to explain. Prof. Sircar said that *nigama* was the mercantile corporation of a city or area. Dr. P. K. Bhattacharya referred to the *Vārendraka-śilpi-goṣṭhī*, the *Cuḍāmaṇi* of which was *Rāṇaka Śūlapāṇi* and which he regarded as a guild of scribes. Prof. Sircar observed that *Rāṇaka* might have been a title conferred on the Chairman of the guild of artisans of Varendra or North Bengal and that *śilpi-goṣṭhī* really means a corporation of artisans, not of scribes. He also pointed out that the word *goṣṭhī* here may also mean *samūha* so that *Śūlapāṇi* is merely called the best among the Varendra artists.

The morning session ended at 1 p.m.

Afternoon session

After the break for luncheon, Dr. G. B. Upreti read a note entitled 'The Dharmasūtras on Trade', in which he said that, during the period of the Dharmasūtras, trade was in a flourishing condition. He further observed that tribal economy became obsolete during the age of the Buddha. Prof. Sircar pointed out that the Jātakas, which were composed according to some scholars between the 3rd century B. C. and the 6th century A. D., refer to tribal economy. He therefore wondered what Dr. Upreti understood by the expression tribal economy. Sri A. K. Chakravarti said that Dr. Upreti probably meant agricultural economy and community production. Dr. S. K. Mitra observed that tribal economy and mercantile economy existed side by side for a long time. Prof. Sircar agreed with the view.

Next Dr. P. K. Bhattacharya read his paper entitled 'Kānyakubja : An Important Centre of Trade and Commerce', which discussed the importance of Kānyakubja upto the 12th century A. D. Prof. Sircar observed that Dr. Bhattacharya indicated the political rather than the commercial importance of Kānyakubja. Kanauj had been the headquarters of several ancient Indian ruling families and must have been a centre of trade ; but, Prof. Sircar pointed out, its greatness as a commercial centre is not satisfactorily proved by the evidence at our disposal. It was a city of thousand temples according to the Muslim chronicles and some historians think that it was the centre of the tripartite struggle among the Pālas, Pratihāras and Rāṣtrakūṭas. Prof. Sircar, however, regarded the struggle as quadripartite because the Āyudhas were also a participant while he further pointed out that the struggle between the Pratihāras and Rāṣtrakūṭas began in the middle of the eighth century not for the occupation of Kanauj which was then the capital of the powerful king Yaśovarman. Kanauj was involved in the struggle because it was the capital first of the Āyudhas and then of the Pratihāras who were engaged in fighting with their neighbours.

Dr. B. Srivastava then read his paper on 'References to Trade and Commerce in the *Amarakośa*'. Sri A. K. Chakravarti wanted to know the exact date of the said text. Dr. Srivastava answered that scholars attributed it to the 6th and 8th century A.D. Prof. Sircar thought 6th century A.D. to be the usually accepted date of the *Amarakośa*. He observed that an intensive study of a dictionary is interesting though the facts it reveals are mostly known from other sources. He thought that trade by barter preceded trade by sale and purchase, though both were flourishing side by side for a long time. Sri A. K. Chakravarti observed that both existed side by side as late as the 17th century A.D. Dr. S. Bandyopadhyay did not agree with Dr. Srivastava's identification of Kotimba of the *Periplus* with Kola of the *Amarakośa* for these two terms are mentioned separately in the *Aṅgavijjā*. Sri T. N. Chakraborty

doubted whether the *Amarakośa* can be treated as a source of history ; but this view was regarded as strange and was not shared by anybody else while Dr. A. M. Shastri regarded the book to be one of the best sources.

Dr. A. K. Chatterjee read his paper entitled 'Industrial Professions in the Pali Jātakas,' in which he gave an account of the every-day life and the various vocations followed by several classes of people of those days. Dr. S. K. Mitra suggested that 'Industrial Occupations' should have been a better expression for the title of the paper. Prof. Sircar pointed out that Dr. Chatterjee had omitted the tailors called *tunnavāya* in the Jātakas. With the introduction of the *udīcyaveśa*, he said, the tailors' profession must have gained importance especially in the capital cities. Dr. Sm. S. M. Devi referred to a Jātaka speaking of a colony of tailors at Vārāṇasī. Dr. A. M. Shastri observed that carpenters, called *vardhaki*, were architects and builders of houses. Prof. Sircar pointed out that the masons were called *vardhaki* or *śilāvardhaki*. Dr. Sm. Champakalakshmi observed that *takṣaka* means a carpenter even today. Dr. S.R. Das wanted information about the single-column house mentioned by Dr. Chatterjee. Dr. Chatterjee answered that there are several references to the said type of building, though it is difficult to say what it really was.

Next Dr. L.B. Keny read his paper on 'Magadha a Commercially Active Place in Ancient India'. Before taking up the reading of his paper, Dr. Keny suggested that, in such seminars, scholars should not only collect facts from different literary sources, but should try to assess and evaluate them with the help of the practical knowledge of one another. He referred to the science of ship-building in Bhoja's *Yuktikalpataru* and said that some descriptions in such works have been written by people often out of their imagination and the description of foreign ships might have been inserted without knowing the real technique. Dr. O. P. Verma remarked that historians cannot minimise the importance of literary sources. Prof. Sircar also thought that they have to search for truth through

a collection of facts. With regard to the description in the *Yuktikalpataru* referred to by Dr. Keny, he mentioned such difficulties as errors creeping into the texts and insufficient knowledge of Sanskrit among the students of history. He further observed that ships are mentioned in Indian texts from very early times and it is more logical that the Indians should depend on their own technique than taking recourse to imaginary descriptions of foreign vessels. Dr. S.K. Mitra agreed with Dr. Keny's remark that, in such seminars, more attention should be paid to the evaluation of collected materials. With regard to Dr. Keny's remarks about the impracticability of construction of ships on the lines indicated in the *Yuktikalpataru*, Dr. Mitra referred to temple building as described in the Oriya *śilpa-śāstras* which should be supplemented by practical knowledge transmitted from master to disciple. Prof. Sircar wondered whether *Māgadha* meaning 'a minstrel' suggested one of the principal professions adopted by the people of Magadha.

Prof. D.C.Sircar then read his paper entitled 'Traders' Privileges guaranteed by Kings'. With the help of literary as well as epigraphical sources, he drew attention to some such privileges enjoyed by the traders of particular areas. He showed how the punishment for certain crimes, committed by the traders, was lesser than that in the case of ordinary criminals. Sri A. K. Chakravarti wanted to know whether the tax called *prāveśya* was paid by merchants for their own entry or for their goods. Prof. Sircar thought that the tax must have been paid for the goods though evidence is not definite on the point. Dr. S. Bandyopadhyay asked whether the traders enjoyed some privileges for exporting their goods. Prof. Sircar said that there was no clear evidence on the question. Viṣṇuṣeṇa's charter mentions tax paid by the merchants while crossing the boundary of the king's dominions. Dr. Sm. B. Lahiri observed that Kauṭilya also mentions some privileges given to the trade guilds by the king.

Prof. Sircar then thanked all the scholars participating in the Seminar for the success of the day's deliberations. The afternoon session ended at 5 p.m.

I

WOMEN IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN ANCIENT INDIA

Sm. Sushil Malti Devi, Patna University

One of the largest single industries of India is her textile industry. The country is considered to be the third biggest producer in the world in factory-made cotton yarns and fabrics, and, in the consumption of cotton, her position comes second. The industry contributes a major share to the country's earning in foreign exchange, netting on an average a hundred crore of rupees per annum. Credit to these achievements is to be given as much to the women workers employed in the craft as to their male counterparts. Indian textile industry has always been very prosperous; it would, therefore, be interesting to learn as to what extent ancient Indian women contributed towards that prosperity.

From the early days of the Indus Valley Civilization, weaving appears to be a largely followed avocation. Numerous spindle-whorls in pottery, shells and semi-precious stones found from the houses in the Indus cities, apparently bear testimony to the people of the Valley, both rich and poor, being equally acquainted with the craft and having practised it. The shawl (probably woollen) of tri-foil pattern wrapped round the bust of a bearded human figure¹ and the microscopic specimen of a cotton cloth scrap sticking to a silver vase² give an idea of the materials worked upon in weaving in those days. The patterning of the shawl and chemical test of the cotton scrap lead us to conjecture that embroidering or printing and dyeing were done as allied business in the textile handicraft. The chemical test revealed that the cotton stuff sticking to the vase was dyed with colours prepared from Indian madder³ and that the material, i.e. cotton, bears affinity to the

1 Marshall, *Mohenjodaro* [sic—Ed.].

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 32ff.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

variety of the coarse cotton still grown in the Sind region. The handicraft was followed in the form of cottage industry and hence it is presumable that the women assisted in various capacities in preparing the textile goods. The question may, however, arise whether outside labour consisting of women workers, wage-earning or slaves, was also employed in the production. There are evidences which point to the volume of production being not insignificant suggesting thereby that the textile goods were not only meant for home consumption, but were produced also with a view to pushing them in the market. Finds of units of linear measurements and weight standard may also suggest that cloth prepared by the Indus people found its way in the local market. That it was export-oriented too may be conjectured when one finds indications that the Indus people were commercially connected with several civilizations of the then known world. The tri-foiled and the indigo-coloured cotton coverings of the Egyptian mummies resembling the Indian stuff strengthen the above view. It is further substantiated by the discovery of the remains of a ferry wharf at Lothal casting important sidelight on the brisk maritime activity of the Indus people. It would, therefore, be legitimate to suggest that the textile goods may certainly have been carried out on a large scale. Hence, it would not be surprising if the volume of production necessitated the employment of outside labourers including women by rich capitalists to work in the workshops housed in their residences. The workers might have been wage-earning labourers as well as slaves. The existence of slavery is vouchsafed by Gordon.⁴ A class of small squatting human figures clasping their knees, in terracotta, which have been found in fairly large number at Harappa, are supposed by him to be slaves. These figures have round cap with prickings all over it and they wear a curious collar with a projection in front. Piggott also suspects the existence of slavery.⁵ The slaves might have been males

4 Gordon, p. 71 [sic—Ed.].

5 Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, p. 170.

and females both. The presence of the spindle whorls of costly as well as ordinary materials may be suggesting that the latter were provided to the poor labourers employed by their rich masters.

The portrait of the women weavers in the Vedic age is encouragingly clear and expressively informative. Women in the said period were so predominating a figure in the textile handicraft that even the divine beings, of the female class, could not be conceived without this trait of weaving. The *Rgveda* refers to a simile in which Night and Dawn are compared as two young girls engaged in weaving.⁶ Weaving cloth for family members appears to be a duty primarily entrusted to the women of the house. Mothers prepared clothing for their children;⁷ girls wove garbs for their marriage;⁸ and the housewives, even if there were interruptions, managed to complete the work which had been left incomplete on the loom before.⁹

These descriptions may suggest that weaving was an art to be learnt by women compulsorily. They appear to be so familiar a figure that special terms like *sirī* and *vayitrī*¹⁰ denoting female weavers were coined and used. In the later Vedic period, the luxuries of a fashionable society rather proved an incentive to the professional female weavers leading to a large amount of specialisation in the various divisions of the handicraft. While *sirī* and *vayitrī* continued to be used to distinguish female weavers, words like *peśaskārī*¹¹ (female embroiderer), *rajayitrī*¹² (female dyer) and *vāsaḥpalpulī*¹³

6 *RV*, II. 36.

7 *Ibid.*, V. 47.6.

8 *AV*, I. 51.

9 *RV*, II. 38.4.

10 *Ibid.*, X. 71.9 ; I. 92.3 [sic—*Pañcav. Br.*, I. 8. 9.—Ed.].

11 *Vāj. Samh.*, XXX.9 ; *Tait. Br.*, III. 4.5.1.

12 Bandyopadhyay, *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, Vol. I, p. 167.

13 *Loc. cit.*

(female washer of cloth and yarn) also came into use suggesting specialisation in various branches of the industry perhaps to cope with the increasing demand for such goods. The *Peśaskārī* class of women workers appear to have been in such large number that, in the time of the *Yajurveda*, they are included in the list of the victims at the *Puruṣamedha* or human sacrifice.¹⁴ Women specialists in the field of embroidery had already made their mark during the *Rgvedic* period, as it is said that the rich people wore mantles adorned with gold, which were prepared by female embroiderers.¹⁵

As to female labourers employed in weaving, a *Rgvedic* passage says,

“We all have various hopes and plans
And many are the ways of men.
The craftsman seeks for jobs to do,
The priest his flock, the leech, the sick,
I am a poet, dad’s a leech,
and mother grinds corn on the quern
As cows go following, one on one,
We all seek wealth in different ways.”¹⁶

‘The craftsman seeks for jobs to do’ and ‘we all seek wealth in different ways’ may well be suggestive of the fact that women craftsmen in weaving also worked for others, and received wages in return.* Existence of crafts training centres for girl apprentices is suspected by Mudgal,¹⁷ and hence, it is surmisable that women in sufficient number attended regular classes in weaving or its sub-branches like spinning, embroidering, design-making, printing, dyeing, etc., and obtained certificates and testimonials which helped them secure remunerative jobs.** Weaving competitions are said to have been organised between

14 *Loc. cit.* [See note 11 above. *Rajayitrī* was also a victim.—Ed.]

15 *RV*, V. 55.6.

16 *Ibid.*, IX. 3.(1.3). [It is IX. 112.1 and 3 in which Dr. Devi seems to read rather too much.—Ed.].

*[It does not follow from the *Rgvedic* passage.—Ed.]

17. *Ibid.*, X. 130 ; cf. Mudgal, *Pol. Econ. Anc. Ind.*

**[They are strange argument and conclusion.—Ed.]

female weavers. The *R̥gveda* informs us of such a contest which took place between two female weavers.¹⁸ It is presumable that the contest was organised in order to test the knowledge of the participants and the winning competitor was offered employment. That some of these female weavers had attained high degree of proficiency in the art is attested by a verse in the *R̥gveda* where the skilled weavers are said to have been clever in producing triple twisted threads out of which special kinds of cloth were prepared.^{18a}

As to female slaves employed in weaving, nothing is known. Slavery existed in the society even during the time of the *R̥gveda*.¹⁹ The *Taittirīya Samhitā* describes slave girls dancing and singing with water pots on their heads.²⁰ In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*,²¹ they are treated as a form of wealth. From the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,²² it is learnt that a king presented to his priest ten thousand elephants and ten thousand female slaves. What a priest could do with ten thousand female slaves unless they were required to be engaged in various jobs in his farms and workshops or he gave them to others on hire thereby gaining wealth by way of wages earned by them? *Honesty, discipline and industriousness were the requisites of workers expected by the employer²³ and the *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* stresses industriousness specially in women.²⁴ It will be seen later that these were the qualities also prescribed in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya when we proceed to discuss the duties of the Superintendent of Weaving. It may suggest that fraudulent practices prevailed in the Vedic period; therefore, such codes

18. *RV*, II. 3.6. [There seems to be no reference here to a weaving contest between two female labourers.—Ed.]

18a *Ibid.*, IX. 86.32. [This seems to be imaginary.—Ed.]

19 *RV*, VIII. 53.3 ; 19.36 ; III. 46.32 ; I. 92.8 ; etc.

20 *Ibid.*, VII. 5.10.1.

21 VII. 24.2.

22 39.1.

*[If he had no need, he could have sold them in the market.—Ed.]

23 *AV*, VI. 117.2.

24 *Vāj. Sam.*, XXII. 22.

were formed for the workers including females. Besides, clothes formed an object of gift ;²⁵ this may suggest either that there existed hired weavers who were engaged in the preparation of fine cloth or that purchases of such presents were made from those who worked on their private looms.*

The weaving tournament held between the two female weavers belonging to the rival groups may suggest some form of corporate activity in the field ; but whether such institutions existed during the early period is doubtful, though terms like *gaṇa* and *vrāta* denoting some organised unions occur in the *Rgveda*.²⁶ Similarly *śreṣṭhin*, meaning the head of a guild in later literature, occurs in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,²⁷ and so also occurs *gaṇapati*.²⁸ Existence of the corporation of weavers, exclusively of women, however, cannot be proved.

Weaving continued to be the chief occupation of women in the Sūtra period. The *Pāraskara Gr̥hyasūtra*²⁹ mentions divine ladies engaged in weaving clothes for the bride : “The goddesses who spun and wove, who stretched the warp, and who crossed the woof, may clothe you for old age. Blessed with long life, you put on this garment.” The whole process of the weaving art is presented here. The mention of goddesses as weavers suggests that the women of higher classes may have pursued the profession or that there was at least a section of the society which did not disapprove of it, but rather extolled the women experts in the field to the position of divine spirits. These women weavers were very clever in their art and had invented a process to prepare a special and costly kind of cloth by soaking yarns thrice in water or rubbing them in ghee.³⁰ With deftness, they could prepare dresses of different

25 RV, VI. 47.22-23 ; X. 107.

*[This is not a strong argument.—Ed.]

26 V. 53.11 ; X. 107.

27 3.30.7.

28 Vāj. Sam., 23.19.1.

29 1.14.13.

30 Kāt. S. S., XV. 5.6-9.



kinds—upper garments, lower garments and turbans, and also weave light and heavy cloth.³¹

Weaving as an industry was in a very flourishing state in the age of the Buddha. Its various branches were organised in guilds, and guilds of weavers, embroiderers, brocade workers and blanket and fur makers are heard of. In spite of these being dominated by males, women weavers were indispensable in carrying out various jobs. They were technicians skilled enough to transform coarse cloth into fine robes. The *Dhammapada* commentary describes how a maiden cut a piece of coarse cloth into strips, pounded and whipped and beat and cleaned it and spun yarns and then had it woven into a robe to be worn by her monk brother.³² In the outskirts of the city of Rājagaha, there was a colony of weavers. The Buddha, while passing through the street, one day noticed a weaver couple spending their life in a very precarious condition being disabled by their old age. Both the husband and the wife worked hard, the woman having helped her husband in spinning and feeding the shuttle; but still they were not able to earn enough even for their bare necessities.³³ Replenishing the shuttle and spinning appear to have been the work mostly performed by the womenfolk of the community. It is learnt that a weaver's daughter, in spite of her eagerness to attend the discourse of the Master, could not find time as she was instructed by her father to replenish the shuttle to complete an unwoven garment on the loom.³⁴ Thus cloth was prepared in the house of the weavers with the assistance of their womenfolk. They took orders from their customers and prepared the goods in their homes or on their looms. So the credit of preparing fine and valuable cloth, which was sometimes sold at the fabulous price of a hundred thousand coins, goes to the women weavers. Not only in weav-

31 *Ibid.*, 11-12.

32 Burlingame, *op. cit.* [sic—Ed.], Vol. XXX, pt. 3, p. 120.

33 *Buddhist Legends*, Vol. XXIX, pt. 2, pp. 86-87 [sic—Ed.].

34 *Ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pt. 3, p. 15.

ing but in tailoring also, women showed their skill. In the suburbs of Vārāṇasī, a community of tailors is said to have been inhabiting. They used to charge one thousand *kaḥāpaṇas* a day for mending old cloth.³⁵

A considerable number of women must have been engaged in spinning and weaving. A woman is described as assuring her dying husband to rest in peace as she could support the family by spinning and weaving.³⁶

The epics also provide information about the female weavers. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, weaving experts were called *sūtra-karma-viśārada*, probably also applied to female weavers.³⁷ In the hermitage of Svayamprabhā, warden of the ladies' establishment of Hemā, Hanumat saw heaps of valuable and beautiful cloth and woolen blankets of variegated colours.³⁸ These may have been made by the women residing in the hostel. The instances lead us to suppose that the girls of wealthy families received training in textile handicrafts under the supervision of lady teachers. The presence of establishments of girls may suggest that the trainees sometimes came from distant places to learn the art under a renowned teacher and thus something like an apprenticeship system probably existed.* The female experts could weave with ease every kind of textile material, woolen, silken, hempen, flaxen, etc., and some of these could be so fine in texture as to be blown away easily by the soft breathing of a person.³⁹ Dyeing and printing were also practised.

As regards the *Mahābhārata*, it is stated that Yudhiṣṭhira was presented with slave girls clad in cotton garments and other fine cloth. The girls belonged to Broach and the

35 *Mahā-Umagga Jātaka*, VI. 366 [sic—Ed.].

36 *Ang. Nik.*, Vol. III, p. 293.

37 *Rām.*, II. 80.1.

38 *Ibid.*, IV. 50.36-37, 53.

*[All the suggestions are based more on imagination than on any substantial evidence.—Ed.]

39 *Ibid.*, V. 9.53-54.

Pāṇḍya and Cola countries, famous for their textile industry.⁴⁰ It is unintelligible why the author stressed upon the cotton dresses of the slaves unless he meant them to be skilled textile technicians sent to the emperor to be employed in the textile factories of the State.* They appear to have been experts in the knowledge of preparing cloth of mixed cotton and wool as well as silk as the word *akārapāsama* would suggest.⁴¹ The slaves were presented to the king by the feudatories.

According to the *Arthaśāstra*, the Superintendent of Weaving had instructions that, in making appointment of suitable persons for the workshops, preference should be given to women candidates, particularly to the orphan girls, the infirm and widows : "Widows, crippled women, girls, mendicant or ascetic women, women compelled to work in default of fines, mothers of prostitutes, old maidservants of the king and prostitutes (*devadāsīs*) who have ceased to attend temple services shall be employed to cut wool, fibre, cotton, penicle (*tūla*), hemp and flax".⁴²

Women of respectable families having no means of subsistence and observing purdah were also not forgotten : "Those women who did not stir out of their houses (*aniṣkāsiṇyaḥ*), those whose husbands are gone abroad and those who are crippled or girls may, when obliged to work for subsistence, be provided with work (i.e. spinning of thread) in due courtesy through the medium of maidservants."⁴³

While discussing the service condition and wages of female employees in the State weaving factories of the first category, Kauṭilya says that their wage should be fixed according to the quality and quantity of the thread spun and manufactured. Those who produced finer thread and greater quantity of

40 *Mah.*, II. 51.8.

*[This is reading too much in the text.—Ed.]

41 *Ibid.*, V. 27. [*Mbh.*, II. 27. Read *a-kārpāsam*.—Ed.]

42 *A S.*, II. 23.

43 *Loc. cit.*

thread were to be encouraged by awards of prizes, etc.⁴⁴ Persons working longer than the fixed time were to get overtime.⁴⁵ The supervising officer had to pay the wages in due time if the work was completed. He was not to show special favour to any worker and pay wages without the work being completed.⁴⁶ These injunctions may suggest that the male supervisors were sometimes partial to some women workers for questionable motives. Sometimes the employees themselves would be corrupt and would try to misappropriate the material or neglect their duties, because rules are laid down requiring levy of fines and reduction of wages if such practices were detected.⁴⁷ The workers, who took advances but did not turn up for work, had their thumbs cut off.⁴⁸ Similar punishments were prescribed for the misappropriation of materials or if the employees absconded with them.⁴⁹

The Dharmaśāstras state that a poor virtuous woman may maintain herself following any of the arts or crafts which their commentators took to mean spinning, etc. (*karttanādinā*).⁵⁰

The dyer's (*rajaka's*) profession was mostly performed by the women of the caste as alluded to by Yājñavalkya. The verse also hints at other professions in which women took part with the male members⁵¹ and it is possible that weavers' women were taken to belong to the category. Besides, not disqualified for entering into any contract with industrial or other business concerns; probably they could perform such businesses on behalf of their husbands,⁵² which implies that weaver women could act as members of the guild. In expound-

44 *Loc. cit.*

45 *Loc. cit.*

46 *Loc. cit.*

47 *Loc. cit.*

48 *Loc. cit.*

49 *Loc. cit.*

50 See Medhātithi and Kullūka on Manu, V. 157 and IX. 75.

51 Yājñ., II [sic—Ed.].

52 *Loc. cit.*

53 *Ibid.*, II. 47, and Viṣṇu, VI. 31.

ing the sources of *strīdhana*, earnings of the wives of cowherds, wine-distillers and other low professionals are mentioned, and weavers' earning wives might have been also intended.⁵⁴ In the *Dāyabhāga*, it is expressly said that women earned their livelihood by spinning, weaving, etc.⁵⁵

The *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana refers to the sixty-four arts in which a woman could specialise for getting employment in order to support herself, and the list includes spinning, textile designing, printing, dyeing and tailoring.⁵⁶ It also says that peasant women had to perform several kinds of unpaid work for the village headman, which included spinning yarns of cotton, wool, flax or hemp.⁵⁷ Elsewhere, the mistress of a well-to-do family is ordained to supervise the farms and workshops run by her husband in his absence, which by implication may mean that weaving and spinning were carried on in the house by hired workers.

The *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa also mentions jobs like textile designing, dyeing and printing being done by women specialists. Women experts in these branches are spoken of as invitees to the palace on the occasion of the marriage of Rājyaśrī.⁵⁸ The woven fabrics, however, appear to have been supplied by the weavers. Dyeing was a ceremony to be performed by women on such occasions.

It may be pointed out that *viṣṭi* (forced labour) was a kind of tax which the members of the artisan class had to pay in the form of manual labour for certain days done for their overlords. As attested by the *Jambudvīpakathākoṣa* and *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, weavers' guilds existed and they were totally at the mercy of the king's whim. King Bhoja is said to have ordered the removal of a whole colony of weavers in order to make the place available for the settlement of Brāhmaṇa scholars.

54 *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Vyavahārakāṇḍa [sic—Ed.].

55 See p. 83 [sic—Ed.].

56 *Kāmasūtra*, Pt. I, Ch. 2 [sic—Ed.].

57 *Ibid.*, V. 55.

58 Ch. IV ; cf. Agrawala, *Harṣacarita*, p. 74, note 1 ; p. 75, note 3.

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Inscriptions also provide information regarding women in the weaving industry. Several inscriptions of the time of the Śātavāhanas and Western Kṣatrapas allude to the weavers' guilds functioning in a very flourishing condition.⁵⁹ The Mandasor inscription of the time of Kumāragupta I furnishes an interesting account of the accomplishments of the various members of a silk-weavers' guild which migrated from the Lāṭa country to Mandasor.⁶⁰ In the early medieval grants, weavers are mentioned along with several other classes as inhabitants of the villages granted to the donees together with the latter's right to exact unpaid labour from the former by way of payment of taxes.⁶¹ These artisans and craftsmen were called *prajā* or *parijana* meaning attendants,⁶² and, as Lakṣmidhara would suggest, their women also were liable to render services. The Kharepatan plates dated 1008 A.D. mention the services rendered by the womenfolk, though not particularly by female weavers. The record says that the grantee was entitled to demand services from the female attendants (*dārikā-kuṭumbinī*), and from the families of oil-men, gardeners, potters and washermen.⁶³

In the Jātakas, the work of weaving began to be looked down as a low occupation (*hīna-sippa*). This had an adverse effect, and women of the higher castes left the job. The notion having grown stronger in later times, the weavers had to settle in colonies away from the habitations of the higher castes. Al-Bīrūnī, while enumerating eight classes of low occupations, mentions weaving as one of them.

The centralised government of the Mauryas opened workshops and made arrangements for providing jobs even to ladies of respectable families; but during the later period, the Kuṣāṇas and Imperial Guptas did not take any interest in

59 JBORS [sic—Ed.].

60 Ep. Ind., Vol. VIII [sic—Ed.].

61 CII, Vol. III [sic—Ed.]

62 Misra, Orissa under the Bhauma Kings [sic—Ed.].

63 Ep. Ind., Vol. III, pp. 297-302.

such enterprises. They preferred to allow the guilds or local agencies a free hand in dealing with these problems.*

*[The suggestion is based on insufficient evidence. The *Arthaśāstra* can hardly be assigned to the Maurya age in its present form.—Ed.]

II MAGADHA, A COMMERCIAL CENTRE IN ANCIENT INDIA

Dr. L. B. Keny, St. Xavier's College, Bombay University

Considerable work has been already done by scholars as regards the commercial relations of India with other countries of the world in ancient times. We attempt here to narrate the contribution of Magadha to this early international trade.

By Magadha is meant the territory comprised from north to south between the Ganges and the Vindhya range, and from west to east between the river Son and Campā—a comparatively small area which is now-a-days covered by the Districts of Patna and Gaya in Bihar.

That Magadha, in early times, was chiefly a seat of lively trade is evident from the fact that the people of Magadha were engaged in the work of travelling with merchandise, according to the law books.¹

Ancient Indian literature is replete with references to the maritime and caravan trade, which prove that the ocean as well as the land routes were freely used by the Indians in early times, as highways of international commerce.

Rājagṛha, the old capital of Magadha, was a great centre of trade with a trade-minded population. It had its own millionaire bankers.² The *Petavatthu Commentary*³ tells us that there was, at Rājagṛha, a merchant whose immense wealth could not be exhausted even if 1000 coins were spent every day. That was a place where traders flocked to sell their merchandise.⁴ The merchants of Magadha were so

1 *Manusamhitā*, X. 47 : "The Sūtas must live by managing horses and by driving cars ; the Ambaṣṭhas, by curing disorders ; the Vaidehas, by waiting on women ; the Māgadhas, by travelling with merchandise."

2 Fausboell, *Jātaka*, Vol. I, pp. 156, 466.

3 PTS, pp. 1-9.

4 *Dīvyāvadāna*, ed. by Cowell and Neil, p. 307 ; *Vinaya Piṭaka*, ed. Oldenberg, Vol. I, pp. 224-25.

respected that they had a free access to the kings themselves. Kākavarṇa, king of Magadha, can be mentioned as an example.⁵ Even the *Mahābhārata* describes the people of Magadha bringing costly articles as tribute to king Yudhiṣṭhira at the Rāja-sūya sacrifice.⁶ "I shall present you with the articles manufactured in Magadha,"⁷ says king Daśaratha, while appeasing his irate queen Kaikeyī. These evidences suggest the advance of Magadha in mercantile products.

Magadha was not only a prosperous country when it was colonised by the Āryas;⁸ but it was so even in the pre-Aryan times. The one and the only reference found in the *Ṛgveda*, describes Magadha as a very rich country.⁹ Griffith translates the hymn as follows: "Among the Kikaṣas what do the cattle do? They pour no milk draught, they heat no cauldron. Bring thou to us the wealth of Pramaganda; give up to us, O Maghavan, the low born."¹⁰

The Kikaṣas are said to be a Nonaryan people and synonymous with the Magadhas.¹¹ And the contempt towards them, as can be seen from the hymn, was due to the fact that they were outside the pale of Aryanism. Even during the period of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, neither Kosala nor Videha was fully Brāhmanized, much less Magadha.¹²

The very occupation of important centres on the Ganges and the Jumna by the Nonaryan Rākṣasas, Dasyus and Asuras proves that they were a sea-faring people.¹³ Prafulla Chandra Basu goes even to the extent of stating that the art of navigation was originally a Dravidian art, and that the Āryas

5 *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*, LVI. 26.

6 *Mahābhārata*, III. 2531.

7 *Rāmāyaṇa* II. 10.37.

8 Rangacharya, *History of Pre-Mussalman India*, Part I, p. 334.

9 *Ṛgveda*, III. 53.14.

10 *Hymns of the Ṛgveda*, Vol. I, p. 374.

11 Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 159.

12 *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I.4.1.10.

13 Cf. Sesha Iyengar, *Dravidian India*, Vol. I, p. 137.

learnt the same from the Dravidians.¹⁴ India had her flourishing inland and foreign trade even long before the advent of the Āryas. And the Dravidians are responsible for the great advance of early commerce.

Magadha is an inland country. She, therefore, ought to have had her own inland routes reaching the sea ports on the western and eastern coasts of India, for her trade with the foreign nations by sea. And we have ample evidences to show that there were great caravan as well as river passages passing east and west through Magadha.

The Classical writers mention caravan routes passing directly from Patna (capital of Magadha in later days) to the Persian gulf.¹⁵ Even Iran was directly linked up with Magadha by a well-provided trade route by land.¹⁶ Eratosthenes seems to have known well the Royal Road to Pāṭaliputra (Patna).¹⁷ The first thing that struck Megasthenes, on entering India, was this Royal Road starting right down from the frontier and meeting Taxila, Hastināpura, Kanauj and Prayāga on the route.¹⁸

Since Chang-kien's discoveries, as early as 106 B.C., direct trade routes by land passed from China to Iran by way of Bactria. Being a meeting place of caravans from China to the east, Iran and lands further to the west, Pāṭaliputra¹⁹ and Barygaza (Broach)²⁰ to the south, Bactria was a very important centre of trade.

The trade routes facilitated the inland commerce to a great extent. And the Pali works are full of such accounts. One such road linked Śrāvastī and Rājagṛha, meeting on its way

14 'Some Aspects of the Economic Life in Ancient India', *IHQ*, Vol. I, p. 38.

15 Cf. Warmington, *Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, p. 12.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 31 ; Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 87.

17 Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, p. 93.

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43, 64-65.

19 Tarn, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40.

20 Schoff, *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, pp. 48, 64.

places like Kapilavāstu, Kusinārā, Pāvā, Vaiśālī, Pāṭaliputra and Nālandā. The road continued further to Gayā and met there another route leading to Vārāṇasī.²¹

The overland trade, as suggested by the Jātakas, seems to have far surpassed in importance the sea-borne trade. The *Apaṇṇaka* and *Vaṇṇupatha Jātakas* throw considerable light on the difficulties of the caravans and the distances traversed, east and west, even through extensive deserts.²² The caravans were very big, generally composed of 500 carts.²³ Anātha-piṇḍika's caravans travelled from Sāvatti to Rājagṛha and back,²⁴ and also to the borders probably towards Gandhāra.²⁵

At the time of king Bimbisāra of Magadha, there was a brisk trade between Rājagṛha and Roruka²⁶ (Sovira in Gujarat). It was on the road from Rājagṛha to Nālandā that Mahākassapa met the Buddha for the first time.²⁷ Rājagṛha and Paṭiyāloka were also commercially connected by a trade route, which was said to be infested by robbers.²⁸ The caravan route from Vārāṇasī to Bharukaccha, passing through the desert, also finds mention in the *Dīpavaṃsa*.²⁹ The *Vinaya Piṭaka* again mentions a highway between Vārāṇasī and Rājagṛha.³⁰ The story of Serissaka in the *Peta-* and *Vimānavatthus*, describing the caravan route from Aṅga and Magadha

21 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. I, p. 81 ; *Mahāvamsa*, VI. 4 ; cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 103.

22 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, pp. 98, 107.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 107, 377 ; Vol. II, p. 335 ; Vol. III, p. 200 ; Vol. IV, p. 350. ['Five hundred' was a conventional number.—Ed.]

24 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 92.

25 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 214.

26 *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 544-45 ; cf. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol. II, p. 235. [It was in Sind.—Ed.]

27 *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II, XVI, 11.

28 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. IV, pp. 79-80.

29 *Dīpavaṃsa*, IX. 26 ; cf. Ghosh, 'An Introduction to the Study of Antiquities found at the Pāṭaliputra Excavation', *Proceedings and Transactions of the 8th All-India Oriental Conference*, p. 628.

30 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. I, p. 212.

to Sindhu-Sovira accross a great desert,³¹ is a further corroboration of the inland trade routes between the places mentioned above.

Rāma's journey from Ayodhyā to Mithilā³² via Magadha, is another evidence of the land route at the time of the epics.

For a country like Magadha, with a low level of ground, boats formed the chief conveyance for inland communication. Like caravans by land, ships by waterways played an important part in ancient Magadhan trade. Waterways were so much in extent during the Mauryan period, that a special 'Superintendent of Ships' was being appointed to examine the accounts of navigation, not only on oceans, but also on rivers.³³ The Jātaka literature contains abundant references to ships and seafaring, and bears testimony to the maritime activities of that time. Seafaring had a great attraction to the Magadhas. The *Divyāvadāna* states that a householder of Rājagṛha went to sea with merchandise, in spite of his newly born son.³⁴ The *Avadānaśataka* gives a story of the wife of a merchant of Rājagṛha, who worships and promises god Nārāyaṇa a golden wheel, on the safe return of her husband who had gone to the sea.³⁵

Ancient literature is replete with the information of Indian, especially Magadhan, sea routes, leading to different countries and nations. Ships sailed between Magadha and Bengal at the Mauryan times; even now boats are seen sailing down the Ganges, between Patna and Calcutta.³⁶ During the Buddhist period* boats went right down to the mouth of the Ganges and then further on, either across or along the coasts of Burma.³⁷

31 Vide Law, *India as described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, p. 70.

32 *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. 26-34.

33 *Arthaśāstra*, trans. Shamsastry, 1915, pp. 156ff.

34 *Divyāvadāna*, p. 301.

35 *Avadānaśataka*, Vol. I, p. 129.

36 Haraprasad Shastri, 'Contributions of Bengal to Hindu Civilisation', *JBORS*, Vol. V, p. 103.

*[According to the evidence of the Jātakas' is probably meant.—Ed.]

37 Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

The two trading expeditions spoken of in the *Bāveru Jātaka* indicate continuous seafaring activities of the early Dravidians who spread their civilisation from the islands of Java and Bali in the east, to the whole Mediterranean basin and even to Normandy, England and Ireland in the West.³⁸ The *Bāveru Jātaka* points to the existence of trade between India and Babylon across the Persian Gulf.³⁹ Mahinda seems to have travelled by water from Patna to Ceylon.⁴⁰

During the 1st century A.D., India was a seat of international commerce. She had trade relations with Syria, South Arabia, East Africa, Berenice, Muza and Alexandria.⁴¹ At the time of Augustus, Eudaemon (Aden) in Arabia was a prosperous and wealthy meeting place of Greek, Arabian and Indian merchants.⁴² A little before the death of Marcus Aurelius, even Rome had an intense commercial intercourse with India.⁴³ There existed 'a maritime commerce between India and Arabia from the earliest period of humanity'.⁴⁴ According to Sayce, 'at the very dawn of the historic period in Babylonia, maritime intercourse was being carried on between this country on the one hand and the Sinaitic Peninsula and India on the other'.⁴⁵ The find of Indian teak in the ruins of Ur makes the same scholar conclude further that 'Chaldaean traders had also made their way to the western coast of India'.⁴⁶ This was as early as about 3,000 B.C.⁴⁷ In the days of king Solomon (c. 1015 B.C.) ships of Tarshish (Tartessos in

38 Banerji, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, pp. 30-31.

39 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 126.

40 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. III, pp. 337-38.

41 Schoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89, 101, 103, 106.

42 Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

43 Cf. Sewell, 'Roman Coins found in India', *JRAS*, 1904, pp. 623-30.

44 Ball, 'A Geologist's Contribution to the History of Ancient India', *Int. Ant.*, Vol. XIII, p. 228.

45 *The Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 136.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 137; cf. Hewit in *JRAS*, 1887, p. 337.

*7 Mookerji, *Indian Shipping*, p. 85.

Spain) went to India, every three years.⁴⁸ That there was, at the end of the fourth millennium B.C., a close trade connection between Babylonia and India, is confirmed by the fact that seals of exactly the same type are found in Babylonia and in the Indus Valley.⁴⁹

The earliest recorded traders in Indian commodities were the Egyptians. According to Lenormant, 'in the abundant booty, loading the vessels of Pharaoh for conveyance to the land of Egypt, appear a great many Indian animals and products not indigenous to the soil of Yemen—elephant's teeth, gold, precious stones, sandal wood, and monkeys.'⁵⁰ In the Mosaic period (1491-1450 B.C.), precious stones were a speciality of India.⁵¹

Turning to the Greek writers, we get more information about the Indian products of international commerce. Herodotus (480 B.C.), the father of history, refers to Xerxes' Indian army wearing cotton garments and carrying with them cane-bows and cane-arrows with iron points. The historian further informs us that 'there are [in India] trees which grow wild there, the fruit whereof is a wool exceeding in beauty and goodness that of sheep'. "The natives make their clothes of this tree-wool (cotton)."⁵² While describing the products of India, Herodotus further says, 'Gold too is produced there in vast abundance, some dug from the earth, some washed down by the rivers.'⁵³ In fact, India was the only nation to pay her tributes to the Persian monarch Darius in terms of gold. It amounted to 360 Euboic Talents equivalent to £ 1,290,000.⁵⁴ The Babylonians, it is said, obtained Indian hounds to such

48 I Kings, IX. 27, 28; cf. Hewitt, 'Notes on the Early History of Northern India', *JRAS*, 1889, p. 203.

49 Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, pp. 49-51; cf. Hewitt, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

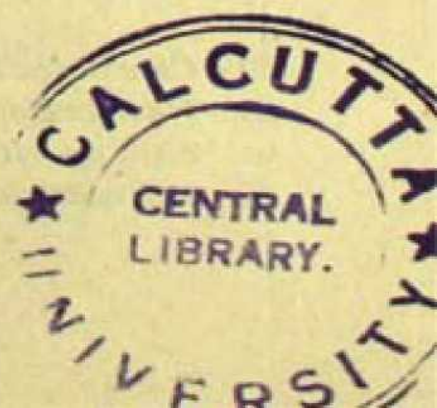
50 Vide Ball, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

51 *Loc. cit.*

52 Herodotus, III. 106.

53 Cf. *ibid.*, III. 98.

54 Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 96; cf. Herodotus, III. 951.



a number that four large villages were reserved for their food.⁵⁵ As early as the 6th century B.C., Indian cedar and teak pieces were used in Babylon.⁵⁶ Rice, peacocks and sandal-wood were known by their Indian names to the Greeks of the 5th century B.C.⁵⁷ The Chinese traveller Hiuen-tsang mentions gold, silver, copper, white jade, fire-pearls (amber), gems and precious stones of various kinds, as the commercial products of India.⁵⁸ The Jātaka literature informs us that, about the 6th century B.C.,* the merchants dealt with especially gold, gems, silk, muslins, cutlery, and armour, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes, and drugs, ivory and ivory-work.⁵⁹ Indian animals like apes, peacocks, parrots, elephants and pythons are said to have been exported to Rome in ancient times.⁶⁰

Some of the forest-products of India, exported outside are already mentioned. According to the Chinese traveller Fa-hien, "In mid-India the heat and cold are so equalised that trees will live for thousands of years, and so many as ten thousand."⁶¹ In the days of the Mauryas, adequate fines and compensations were levied upon those who caused any damage to productive forests. A special 'Superintendent of Forest Produce' was appointed for this. He looked after not only the timber, bamboo, creepers, fibrous plants, leaves and flowers, but also poisons, skins and bones of animals found in the forests.⁶²

Different mineral products, as noted before, were another export of India, in the early days. During the Mauryan period, their existed not only plain and mountain, but also

55 Herodotus, II. 192.

56 Mookerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

58 Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. I, p. 89.

*[The Jātakas are not really earlier than the 2nd or third century B.C.—
Ed.]

59 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 89.

60 Warmington, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-51.

61 Beal, *op. cit.*, p. lxii.

62 *Arthaśāstra*, *op. cit.*, pp. 121ff.

ocean mines, fetching conch-shells, diamonds, precious stones, pearls, coral and salt. The products being very profitable, Kauṭilya advocated the centralisation of these mineral products, and advised that mining and commerce should be kept as a State monopoly. So much importance was attached to mining that a trade-route traversing a large number of mines was always preferred to any other route. Kings were specially advised to take up to mining operations seriously, to avoid a depleted treasury. A 'Superintendent of Mines' was appointed to examine the different mines. There was a special 'Superintendent of Ocean Mines' and a 'Superintendent of Metals'.⁶³

India had her share in different types of cloth also. Under the Persian empire, Indian silk is said to have been exchanged by weight with gold.⁶⁴ Cotton was woven into cloth in India before the dawn of history.⁶⁵ And as early as the 4th millennium B.C., it was exported by sea to the head of the Persian Gulf.⁶⁶ Egypt also received it about 1700 B.C. The Egyptians even dyed their cloth with Indian indigo.⁶⁷ Early botanists recorded the Indigo of commerce to be wild in India, Africa and Arabia; and out of 300 species, India alone possessed some 40.⁶⁸ Indian indigo reached Europe by the Persian Gulf and Alexandria.⁶⁹

The *Periplus* mentions export of Indian ivory from Barygaza (Broach) and from Orissa.⁷⁰

Magadha is situated in the eastern part of India described by Hiuen-tsang as a land with valleys and plains which, being well watered and cultivated, were fruitful and productive.⁷¹ The climate of Magadha, according to him, was pleasantly hot

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 94ff.

64 Mookerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-93.

65 Schoff, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 71 ; cf. Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

67 Sesha Iyengar, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 139.

68 Watt, *A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India*, Vol. VI, Pt. III, p. 389.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 391.

70 Schoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 47.

71 Beal, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

and the soil rich and fertile.⁷² The *Sabhā-parvan* attributes the prosperity of Magadha to its never-failing rainfall.⁷³ It was full of kine, wealth, water and trees.⁷⁴ Rājagṛha the capital of Magadha, is said, in the *Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka*, to be 'rich in provisions and abounding with food and drink'.⁷⁵

Gold, as we have already seen, was one of the most important products of India that was exported outside. The *Periplus* refers to gold as a produce of the Ganges region, and to gold-mines in the Chota Nagpur plateau.⁷⁶ But about 80 per cent of the gold raised throughout the world is from alluvial washings.⁷⁷ Gold washing has been carried out extensively in Orissa.⁷⁸ The *'Ain-i-Akbarī* states that gold can be obtained 'by the washing from the sands of the Ganges, Indus, and several other rivers, as most of the waters of this country are mixed with gold'.⁷⁹ By the side of Magadha, Manbhum possesses numerous parts of gold-bearing sands, the southern half of the District, especially, containing gold in nearly every stream.⁸⁰ The river Son (gold)* is named Erannoboas from the Sankrit *Hiranyavāha* (bearing gold), by the Classical writers.⁸¹ This river is the eastern boundary of Magadha ; but at the time of the *Rāmāyaṇa* it flowed through the town of Rajgir.⁸²

Ivory was another Indian export. The Indian sciences of training and treatment of elephants seem to have been very

72 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 82.

73 *Mahābhārata*, II. 807.

74 *Ibid.*, 797 ; cf. Samaddar, *Glories of Magadha*, p. 9.

75 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 271.

76 Schoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 160, 250 ; cf. Watt, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 524.

77 Ball, *op. cit.*, p. 229. [Is this the case at present ?—Ed.]

78 Watt, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 520, 524.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 519.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 524. [Manbhum is no longer a District now.—Ed.]

*[*Śoṇa* does not mean 'gold'.—Ed.]

81 McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 42.

82 *Rāmāyaṇa*, I. 32.9. [Dey's *Geog. Dict.* says so, though his identification of Sumāgadhā with the Son may be wrong. Read 'western boundary'.—Ed.]

ancient. During the Mauryan period, there was the officer called 'Superintendent of Elephants' who protected the forests reserved for elephants, and also supervised the work of their doctors and trainers.⁸³ Elephant training and riding were two of the main professions at the Buddha's time.⁸⁴ "The wild elephant," according to Sanderson, "abounds in most of the large forests of India, from the foot of the Himalayas to the extreme south, and throughout the Peninsula to the east of the Bay of Bengal...."⁸⁵ But according to Megasthenes, the Praisian (Prācyā=Eastern) elephants were the largest in all the land.⁸⁶ According to Hiuen-tsang, "There are great elephants.....large in size and of great height," to the south of Rājagṛha, where a forest was situated.⁸⁷ Elephants from Kaliṅga, Aṅga, Kārūṣa, and the East, are said to be the best by Kauṭilya.⁸⁸ The Parileyyakam was an elephant-forest near Kosambī and on the way to Sāvattthi.⁸⁹ Even in the Vajjian realm there was a place called Hatthigāma, 'elephant village'.⁹⁰ There is no wonder then that the Magadhas and Kaliṅgas presented king Yudhiṣṭhira with elephants at the Rājasūya.⁹¹ White elephants are said to have been used by the royal family of Magadha.⁹²

Ivory from Kaliṅga was exported to Rome.⁹³ The city of Vārāṇasī was known for a street of the ivory workers.⁹⁴ Even in modern times, Sonapur on the Ganges, opposite Patna, is a chief Indian mart where elephants are sold.

83 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 31.

84 Rockhill, *Life of Buddha*, p. 99.

85 Watt, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 209.

86 McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 188.

87 Beal, *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, p. 127.

88 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 11.

89 *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Vol. III, p. 95 ; *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. I, p. 352.

90 *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Vol. IV, p. 213.

91 *Mahābhārata*, II. 1874-77.

92 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 444.

93 Cf. Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

94 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, 197.

As late as 1875, rice, together with oil-seeds, formed more than a half of the whole of the Ganges traffic.⁹⁵ Together with different grains, rice, according to the Jātakas, was a staple food.⁹⁶ But rice, especially of Magadha, was the best of all, being known for its special type of fragrance and large grain. According to Hiuen-tsang, the Mahāśāli rice was as large as the black bean, and when cooked, was aromatic and shining, like no other rice at all. It grew only in Magadha, and nowhere else. It was offered only to the king or to religious persons of great distinction, and hence had the name Kung-ta-jin-mai, 'rice offered to the great householder.'⁹⁷ According to the *Mahāvagga*, the rice-fields of Magadha were well divided into small plots and in rows, and by outside boundaries, and by cross boundaries.⁹⁸

India was known for her precious stones in very ancient times. References to mines of such precious stones in Magadha occur in early literature. The *Rāmāyaṇa* speaks of Magadha as a place rich in mine-treasures.⁹⁹ Daṇḍin speaks of Pāṭaliputra as the foremost of all the cities and as full of gems.¹⁰⁰ According to the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* of the *Sutta-piṭaka*, Magadha was full of seven kinds of gems.¹⁰¹ The *Divyāvadāna* describes Magadha as a beautiful city with all kinds of gems.¹⁰² A precious gem of Vepulla (one of the hills of Girivraja, the ancient capital of Magadha) is referred to in the *Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka*.¹⁰³ The king of Kalinga is said to have received another precious jewel from Vepulla, as a present.¹⁰⁴ The traditional account of the Jaina writers states

95 Hunter, *Statistical Accounts of Bengal*, Vol. XI, pp. 25-26.

96 Cf. Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 276-77.

97 Beal, *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, p. 109.

98 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. I, p. 287.

99 II. 10.37-38.

100 *Daśakumāracarita*, 1st Ucchvāsa, śl. 2.

101 PTS, Vol. I, p. 213 ; Vol. IV, pp. 252, 256, 260.

102 See p. 425.

103 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 272.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

that king Bimbisāra of Magadha gave a huge necklace of eighteen strings of jewels to his younger son.¹⁰⁵ A mine of precious stones that lay between the lands of the Magadhas and the Licchavis, according to the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, was the cause of war between the two powers.¹⁰⁶

Rome imported mostly Chinese silk.¹⁰⁷ India also produced it. Kauṭilya praises the finest silk cloth called *patroṇa* (wool of leaves), manufactured in Magadha.¹⁰⁸ It is no wonder, therefore, that the people of Rājagṛha should present the disciples of the Buddha, with a silk-robe.¹⁰⁹ Silk-worms, even now, are found at the Rajmahal and Kurackpore hills, the tableland of Chota Nagpur, the mountain tracts of Orissa and Central Provinces,* Bengal, Bihar, Bhagalpur** and Berar.

Among the forest products, timber was an Indian export. Magadha had no doubt her forests.¹¹⁰ The Chinese traveller Hiuen-tsang refers to them as looking golden during the spring season.¹¹¹ The *Vattaka Jātaka* describes a Magadhan forest set on fire.¹¹² The *Mahābhārata* describes Magadha as beautiful with trees standing everywhere in it.¹¹³ During the days of king Bimbisāra, a forest of timber in the province of Rājagṛha was reserved for the purpose of the State.¹¹⁴

With all these evidences, there is ample ground to say that Magadha was a great emporium of India, and played a very important part in early international commerce.***

105 *Uvāsagadasāo*, Vol. II, Appendix I, p. 7 ; *Nirayāvalisutta*, pp. 7, 28.

106 Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 141.

107 Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

108 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 11.

109 *Dhammapada Commentary*, Vol. I, pp. 77ff ; cf. Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 277.

*[Now 'Madhya Pradesh' generally speaking.—Ed.]

**[It is in Bihar which is separately mentioned.—Ed.]

110 Cf. Law, *India as described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, pp. 31ff.

111 Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, p. 150.

112 Fausboell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 213.

113 II. 797, 800-801.

114 *Vinaya Piṭaka*, Vol. III, pp. 41, 45.

***[Some of the discussions do not relate to Magadha in particular.—Ed.]

III

THE TRADE ROUTES AND MEANS OF TRANSPORT IN ANCIENT INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM¹

N. N. Acharya, Gauhati University

The problem of transport is vitally connected with the trade and commerce of a country. The fabulous wealth of India, since times immemorial, has attracted not only traders of far off lands, but also invaders. Foreign pilgrims often visited the country to satisfy their religious zeal. When there was army movement of the invader, there was also the movement of the forces of Indian rulers to fight and repulse the invasion. The events, as they are on record, leave no room to doubt the existence of roads and water communications. I prefer here to emphasise the system of communication as it has been referred to in the Jātakas, the *Arthaśāstra* and the Greek and Chinese accounts, with special reference to the means of communications obtaining in Assam.

It is mentioned in the *Suppāraka Jātaka*² that there was thriving trade transactions between the Indus Valley and the countries around the Mediterranean sea during the third millennium B.C.* This brisk commercial relation indicates well-developed trade routes between these two regions. This also hints at a good deal of sea-faring on the part of the Indus Valley people. The sea-routes from the mouth of the Indus lay along the coast to the mouth of the Euphrates. From there the ships either proceeded up the Euphrates and touched the overland routes or continued the coastal voyage along the

1 I offer my thanks to Dr. V. B. Mishra for helping me in the preparation of this paper.

2 *Jātaka*, Vol. IV, 138-43, ed. Fausboell, quoted by M. M. Singh, *Life in North-Eastern India in Pre-Mauryan Times*, p. 246.

*[It is an impossible date for the Jātaka and its evidence.—Ed.]

shores of Arabia and through the Red Sea to Egypt.³ Babylon became the centre of this trade activities and the sea voyages from Broach and Sopara engaged direct trade with Babylon and her neighbouring countries. Indian merchants who carried on extensive trade on Indian products, viz., precious stones, pearls, spices, silver and gold, fine cloth, sandalwood and peacocks, acquired special knowledge of these trade-routes leading from Babylon to Phoenicia, Egypt, Greece, Rome and the interior of Arabia. Hence progress was made in ship-building and Indians built ships big enough to carry 500 men on high seas.⁴ The Vedic literature refers to ships containing a hundred oars and they were probably used for sea-voyage.⁵ We also learn from the Sūtras of Pāṇini that sea-faring was at an advanced stage. Pāṇini refers to *samudra* and two kinds of islands. He also refers to the boat-ferry (*nāvya*).⁶ All these references point to sea-borne trade, marine activities and trade relations with the outside world.

We learn from the Jātakas⁷ that there were four minor but important transport systems which connected the trade centres of Eastern India ; a fifth led to Kaliṅga's capital. These five connected Rājagṛha with the following—Kapilavāstu, Śrāvastī, Mithilā, Campā and Kaliṅga. Three others, covering longer distances, connected Rājagṛha with Puṣkalāvātī, Pratiṣṭhāna and the Sindhu region in Uttarāpatha.

Kauṭilya provides for a supplementary force of cavalry and camels aided by asses for operating in dry weather and on non-marshy ground. He also mentions war-chariots and elephants as means of transport.⁸ Kauṭilya repudiates the

3 R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar, *The Vākāṅka-Gupta Age*, p. 334.

4 *Loc. cit.* [500 is a conventional number.—Ed.]

5 *Vedic Age*, ed. R. C. Majumdar, pp. 248, 400.

6 *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, trans. S. C. Vasu, Allahabad, 1891-98 ; Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, pp. 155-56.

7 *Dīgha-Nikāya*, Vol. II, pp. 72-137 ; *Mahāvagga*, Vol. VI, pp. 28-37 ; *Majjhima Nikāya*, Vol. I, p. 339 ; all quoted by M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-37.

8 R. K. Mookerji, *Caṇḍragupta Maurya and his Times*, p. 167.

general view that water-route is preferable, as it is less expensive and involves less labour, and holds that waterway is more risky and cannot be used in all the seasons.⁹

Caravans from trade centres of the North-East transported goods regularly to Bharukaccha and Suppāraka (two important centres of trade in Western India), from where they were exported to the Mediterranean countries.¹⁰ Trade received special impetus during 600-322 B.C. due to improvement in the means of transport. A later Jātaka informs us that a sheath of iron, two inches wide, was put round the outer edge of the wheel to make it strong. Thus the use of iron brought a new stage in the development of transport at this age.¹¹ Trade also depended to a great extent upon routes and means of communication which presented a problem for a sub-continent like India. Then again the commodities of different kinds were to be brought to the market place from places like forests and mines.¹² The travellers had to pass through deserts with little trace of route and were often led to wilderness. Long journeys took weeks and months, but often failed to take travellers to their destination. Thus the problem of transport posed a challenge.¹³ We also come across cart-tracks in the forests, inhabited by wild beasts and haunted by highway robbers. But at the same time we also get references to the *rājamārga*, *mahāpatha* and *mahāmārga* which suggest the existence of good roads and national highways.¹⁴

Kauṭilya says that the State constructed and maintained trade routes. Development of waste land results in the foundation of villages and construction and security of trade-routes. Foreign policy was geared for the possession of trade-

9 H. P. Chakraborty, *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, p. 246.

10 M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 246

11 R. S. Sharma, *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, p. 60.
[The later Jātakas are assigned to the sixth century A. D. by some authorities.—Ed.]

12 R. K. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 210.

13 H. P. Chakraborty, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77

14 M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

routes. Land and water routes of the Himalayan region and the South attracted attention of the State in ancient times.¹⁵ The State made roads for cart-traffic as well as tracks for beasts of burden like horses, asses and camels.¹⁶ It opened trade-routes in newly colonised rural areas and also constructed roads for different purposes in the urban area.¹⁷

Kauṭilya mentions different kinds of roads as follows : (1) *rājamārga* (highway); (2) provincial roads (connecting different parts of a province with its administrative headquarters); (3) *hasti-patha* (path for elephants); (4) *ratha-patha* (road for chariots); (5) *paśu-patha* (track for cattle); (6) *kṣudra-paśupatha* (track for smaller animals like sheep, etc.); and (7) *manuṣya-patha* (path for men).¹⁸

By the time of Candragupta Maurya, the great highway linking Puṣkarāvati, beyond the Indus, with Pāṭaliputra, the imperial capital, was already in existence. Rural officials were entrusted with the duty of constructing roads with pillars at every 10 stadia to show the distances. This reveals that the Indians rank among the great road-building nations of the ancient world.¹⁹

References to the caravans and Setṭhis from Śrāvasti and merchants from Orissa visiting Rājagṛha, the Rājagṛha Setṭhis visiting Vaiśālī and the like would suggest the existence of land routes linking the important towns of Eastern India such as Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, Śrāvasti, Vārāṇasī and Campā. Most of these routes are known from the wanderings of the Buddha. That the above cities were linked, through land routes, with distant lands like Gandhāra, Kamboja, Sindhu, etc., is shown by references to the visits of merchants from Gandhāra and Kamboja to Videha, of horse-dealers from the Punjab and Sind to Prāgjyotiṣa, and the like. The towns of Eastern India

15 U. N. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Public Life*, p. 91.

16 R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

17 U. N. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

18 R. K. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

19 U. N. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

were connected with one another and with other centres of trade, culture and learning in the country.²⁰

Hiuen-tsang says, "To the east of Kāmarūpa, the country is a series of hills and hillocks without any principal city and it reached the south-west barbarians of China ; hence the inhabitants were akin to the Man and Lao." He mentions the distance between the south-western borders of Sse-Chuan (Shuh) and Kāmarūpa to be a journey of two months and say that it was due to 'the mountains, hard to pass, pestilential vapours and perilous snakes and herbs.' It is curious to note that the song of the victories of the Tsin king of the Mahācīna country in 619 A.D. was widely circulated in Kāmarūpa as referred to by Bhāskara-varman, the Kumārarāja of Kāmarūpa, in c. 638 A.D. This leads us to assume that the song might have come by the shortest route from China to Assam. The route through Tibet was also open in the seventh century A.D. when Strong-btsan-sgampo was converted to Buddhism and allied himself with China and Nepal by marrying a princess from each of the two countries.²¹

In the *Raghuvamśa* of Kālidāsa, Raghu, in the course of his *digvijaya*, marched through the southern slopes of the Himalayas to come to Kāmarūpa.²² There was a land route through Burma joining India with China and Tonkin. Gerini thinks of immigrants from North India through Manipur and Burma influencing Northern Indochina as far as the Tonkin Gulf and the borders of China.²³ There were also other routes to China through Burma, Bhutan and Tibet and the hill tribes, like the Abors, the Daflas and the Mishmis along with the other plains peoples, maintained commercial contacts. These trading routes confirm that Assam in ancient times had regular commercial transactions with China and the Far East

20 M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-36.

21 Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 185f ; P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*, pp. 200f. ; H. P. Chakraborty, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

22 H. P. Chakraborty, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

through Burma, Manipur and the Patkoi and other passes of Assam in the north and the south-east. It is also mentioned in the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* that there were as many as thirtyfive passes between Assam and Tibet and through them horses were brought to the kingdom of Lakhnauti.²⁴

In spite of what Kauṭilya says about water-routes, the transport of goods by water costs less in money and labour and is therefore more profitable.²⁵ Brisk trade was carried along the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Narmadā, Godāvarī, Kṛṣṇā and Kāverī.²⁶ Sandstone from Chunar was brought to Pāṭaliputra by the Ganges for constructing the Aśokan pillars. In early times, Vārāṇasī and Campā were important river ports ; but later on Pāṭaliputra became the biggest and busiest centre of trade in North-Eastern India. Boats sailed as far as Sahajāti in the north-west through the Ganges. Ānanda, the disciple of the Buddha, disembarked at Kauśāmbī on a boat with five hundred Bhikṣus from Magadha.²⁷ Vessels starting from Vārāṇasī anchored at Pāṭaliputra and Campā. It is not unlikely that traders from Pāṭaliputra and Campā sailed for the Eastern lands with their ships carrying locally manufactured goods. Among the islands of the East with which India had thriving trade relations, we may mention Kālamukha (Arakan Coast), Suvarṇabhūmi (Lower Burma), Vesuṅga, Verāpatha, Takkola, Tamali, Tāmraparṇī and Java. Traders from Malaya and China also visited India.²⁸

During the Mauryan period, the *Nāvādhyakṣa*²⁹ (Superintendent of Ships) regulated communications by water and collected ferry dues.³⁰ There were no bridges in those days, but only fording-places and ferries for crossing rivers. The

24 Pemberton, *Report on Bootan*, p. 144 ; P. C. Choudhury, *History of the Civilisation of the People of Assam*, pp. 356-57.

25 R. K. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

26 Majumdar and Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

27 M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 240, 245.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 245. [Suvarṇabhūmi is not exactly Lower Burma.—Ed.]

29 *Ibid.*, p. 243.

30 R. S. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

term *setu* is mentioned ; but it meant not a bridge, but an embankment.³¹

References to the voyages from Campā to Suvarṇabhūmi, from Pāṭaliputra to the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, and from Vaiśālī to Arakan suggest that the vessels sailed from ports on the Ganges to lands beyond the Bay of Bengal. Prince Vijaya's voyage to Ceylon from Bengal with his seven hundred followers testifies to sea-trade and intercourse. Similar indications are offered by the fact that merchants are valued in terms of the number of ship-loads of merchandise possessed by them such as *dvi-nāva-dhana* (one having two cargo boats) or *pañca-nāva-priya* (one sailing with five ship-loads).³² Tāmralipti (modern Tamluk), which is now land-locked, was the principal port in Bengal and carried on extensive trade with China, Ceylon, Java and Sumatra.³³

From the first century A.D., trade was carried on mainly by sea between India and Rome. India developed the important sea-ports of Bhṛgukaccha (Broach), Arikamedu (Pondicherry) and Tāmralipti (in West Bengal).³⁴

The Andhra country was studded with a number of ports at the mouths of the Godāvāri and the Kṛṣṇā of which Kadura and Ghanta* Puhār at the mouth of the Kāverī, and Toṇḍai were the principal ports of the Cola country, Korkai and Saliyur of the Pāṇḍya country and Kottayam and Muziris (modern Cranganore) of the Malabar Coast. They were carrying on trade with the Eastern Archipelago and China, which helped the spread of Indian culture in Eastern Asia. These ports had brisk commercial relations also with the West. Roman and other foreign traders settled down in these ports

31 R. K. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

32 M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-42, 244-45.

33 Majumdar and Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

34 R. S. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

*[It appears that a passage is omitted in the author's copy here and that he wanted to mention Kuḍūra and Ghaṇṭaśāla as the principal ports on the Āndhra coast. There seems to be no mention of the Assamese as sea-farers.—Ed.]

for trade transactions. The Indian rulers tried to facilitate trade by building and maintaining light-houses at necessary points and also by keeping the sea-routes free and safe. At this time, Kalyan, Chaul, Broach and Cambay were the principal ports of the Deccan and Gujarat.³⁵

Buddhist literature shows that the people of North-Eastern India (Assam) were keenly interested in maritime activities and that they sailed to foreign lands for transacting business. References to boats sailing on the ocean with direction-showing birds, are examples of seafaring. There are also references to merchants sailing on the sea with the hope of earning wealth, stories of ship-wrecks, specious ships, ship-building activities, sea-farers of Videha and Campā sailing to Suvarṇabhūmī, furnish us with the evidences that the people of North-Eastern India (Assam) were carrying on brisk sea-trade.³⁶

The position of cities like Prāgjyotiṣa, Hārūpeśvara,* Kāmarūpanagara and Śrī-Durjayā on the bank of the Brahmaputra facilitated commercial intercourse of ancient Assam with the neighbouring countries as well as certain foreign lands.³⁷ Inscriptions refer to the brisk trade activities and plying of the fleet and commercial boats in the Brahmaputra. The Tezpur rock inscription of Harjjaravarman indicates that the royal boats were numerous and even in so wide a river as the Brahmaputra, regulation of local traffic was found necessary to prevent collisions between royal boats and those of the fishermen.³⁸

The Lauhitya-sāgara (Brahmaputra) joined the Bay of Bengal and the Kāmarūpa merchants carried their merchandise

35 Majumdar and Altekhar, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-59.

36 *Dīgha Nikāya*, I. 222, II. 89 ; *Saṃyutta Nikāya* III, 155 ; quoted by M. M. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 241. [What is said here is amusing in view of the fact that Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa, the old names of Assam, are not mentioned in the Buddhist canonical works.—Ed.]

*[The correct form of the name is Haḍapeśvara.—Ed.]

37 P. C. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 353.

in large boats down the Brahmaputra and reached the sea after skirting round the Garo Hills. They crossed the sea and traded with sea-ports like Tāmralipti.³⁹ Hiuen-tsang states that the rulers of Kāmarūpa had the sea-route to China under their protection.⁴⁰ Aphorisms of Ḍāk Puruṣ also refer to commerce by sea with the Arakan coast.

The Assam route connecting India with China and South-East Asia branched off northward from the Grand Trunk Road of ancient India. Chang Kien's report refers to India's trade with South-Western China through Assam and Burma as early as the second century B.C. Besides the Central Asian routes, India was connected with China from very early times by a route through Assam, Upper Burma and Yunnan. The *Periplus* also refers to it when it says that from Thinae raw-silk, silk-yarn and silk-cloth are exported to Damirica by way of the river Ganges.⁴¹

The Assam-Burma route started from Pāṭaliputra, passed by Campā (Bhagalpur), Kajaṅgala (Rajmahal) and Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) and proceeded up to Kāmarūpa in Assam. From Assam, the routes to Burma were three, as at the present time ; viz. (1) by the valley of the Brahmaputra and up to the Patkoi range and then through its passes up to Upper Burma; (2) through Manipur upto the Chindwin Valley (Gerini says that the Hindu travellers entered Burma by the Manipur route from Assam); and (3) through Arakan up the Irawady Valley.

All these routes met near Bhamo and then proceeded to Yunnanfu, i.e., Kunming, the chief city of South China. Through these routes, Assam maintained her cultural contact and commercial relations with China from very early times.⁴²

The *Periplus* says that, in the first century A.D., raw and manufactured silk of Assam were brought down the Brahma-

39 K. L. Barua, *Early History of Kāmarūpa*, pp. 188-89.

40 Watters, *op. cit.*, Intro. XXVI, p. 188 ; P. C. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 354. [Really Beal, *Life*, pp. xxvi, 188 ; but the evidence is dubious.—Ed.]

41 H. P. Chakraborty, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 39.

42 P. C. Bagchi, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

putra and the Ganges and then taken by sea to Limyrica on the coast of Malabar.⁴³ The conquest of Gauḍa, Kosala, Kaliṅga and other lands during the 8th century A.D. by Harṣadeva indicates that there were road and water communications for the march of armies. The constant migration of the Brāhmaṇas and other people to and from Kāmarūpa, as shown by records, also points to the same conclusion.⁴⁴

43 Vincent, *Periplus*, Vol. II, pp. 523f; J. L. Whiteley, *Periplus*, pp. 134f. [This is not correct.—Ed.]

44 P. C. Choudhury, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

IV

ORNAMENT INDUSTRY IN ANCIENT INDIA

Sm. Rajni P. Chauhan, Nagpur University

In ancient India, the love for ornaments was great and their makers were important persons. The Indian jewellers and goldsmiths were famous for their skilled craftsmanship and aesthetic sense. The Suvarṇakāras enjoyed a respectable status and their good work was appreciated.¹ Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* mentions them. A goldsmith was known for his good family background, craftsmanship, good conduct, etc.

A broad survey of the ornament industry, as it existed in India between the 6th century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. has been attempted here. We have utilised the Jātakas and the works of Pāṇini, Kauṭilya, Patañjali and Hāla as well as the archaeological evidences from Taxila in dealing with the nature and technique of ornament industry in early times.*

The skill of the Indian jeweller of the Mauryan times has been discussed.² Manufacture of gold ornaments was then under the charge of a Superintendent of Gold³ whose duty was to get a workshop properly built. The workshop of the goldsmith contained four halls with a courtyard. There was no communication between the halls, and the big hall had only one door. Gold and silver ornaments were manufactured in the halls. Such a shop was built in the middle of the market highway, and a skilful goldsmith was appointed to run it. It was the duty of the Superintendent to appoint skilful goldsmiths who were of noble birth, trustworthy and skilled in their profession. Besides the goldsmiths, there were a number of artisans working in the workshop. The goldsmiths were required to

1 O. C. Handa, *Roopalekha*, Vol. XXXVIII, Nos. 1-2.

*[The said sources are limited and the treatment of the subject is inadequate.—Ed.]

2 A. Mookerjee, in *Cultural Forum*, p. 75.

3 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 13.1.

maintain punctuality in the fulfilment of their assignment. In case of failure, a fine of double the amount of their wages was imposed upon them.⁴ Even if there was a loss of gold to the extent of one Māṣa,⁵ fine was imposed. Strict vigilance was kept over the manufacture of ornaments in respect of their quality and quantity. No fraud was allowed in the scales and weights. The goldsmiths were required to purchase their scales and weights from the State officer.⁶ In spite of a great precaution taken by the smiths, the artisans used to steal a portion of the gold. This they used to do through various ways,⁷ namely knocking off, cutting out, scratching out or rubbing off. The goldsmith was fully conversant with every detail in the manufacture of ornaments. He was allowed a loss of one Kākiṇī in the case of gold and silver in a Suvarṇa.* The articles were manufactured in the presence of the goldsmith evidently to ensure the authenticity of the material. The artisans who performed their job secretly were punished heavily by the court. The punishment in such cases ranged between twelve Paṇas and the loss of fingers of an artisan's hand.

For manufacturing gold or silver ornaments the goldsmith used various types of implements⁸ such as crucible, foul-dross, crane beak, blow pipe, pair of tongs, water vessel, borax, sand made into lumps and touch stones, weights, wooden anvil, tool box, receptacle, peacock-feather, threaded bellows and firepan. A goldsmith's implements are mentioned in Buddhist literature also.⁹

Head ornaments, specially those made of gold, are frequently mentioned, and, among the ornaments of this period, we come across a beautiful head ornament called

4 *Ibid.*, II. 14.2.

5 Māṣa is a silver coin. [This is not quite correct.—Ed.]

6 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 14.15.

7 *Ibid.*, II. 14.44.

[The statement, based on a passage in the *Arthaśāstra* (ed. Shama Sastry, p. 90), refers to the manufacture of coins.—Ed.]

8 *Ibid.*, II. 14.23.

9 *Jātaka*, Vol. VI, p. 189.

*kiriṭa*¹⁰ or tiara. It was made of gold and was nicely set up with pearls and gems of different colours, so that it looked as a real peacock. A girl named Viśākhā obtained from her father, as a part of her marriage-dowry, a peacock-shaped *kiriṭa* for her head. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*¹¹ refers to the ear ornament called *karṇikā* literally meaning the pericarp of a lotus. The jewel was modelled after the pericarp turned upside down. It is the modern Jimiki worn by the ladies of South India.

Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*¹² mentions eight different types of necklaces, among which *phalakahāra* was composed of a number of strands of gold or of precious stones and gems, with flat rectangular slabs at intervals. A beautiful necklace (first century A.D.), found at Sirkap,¹³ is made of gold and composed of two small fishes with tail. The fishes are made of a thin sheet and are hollow. There are holes in their heads for two strings which meet together in the tail.

The *Gāthāsaptatī* mentions bangles and wristlets which indicated *saumāṅgalya* and were sacred to the women. It describes a woman who, after her bath, removes turmeric dust from the perforations of her *jālaavalayas* of gold with a small pick.¹⁴

Besides the necklaces, girdles called *mekhalā*, *kāñcī*, *rasanā*, etc., are mentioned in the work. A gold girdle from Taxila¹⁵ (Sirkap, 1st century A.D.) consists of 116 lily-pattern pieces which are of thin gold, hollow within and with two transverse holes for strings.

Anklets are variously known as *mañjīra*, *tulākoṭi*, *nūpura*, *padāṅgada*, etc. Patañjali¹⁶ mentions anklet as a minor

10 *Kimchhando Jātaka*, No. 511. Cf. S. K. Das, *Economic History of Ancient India*, pp. 217.

11 Pāṇini, IV. 3.65.

12 R. Shamasastry, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

13 Marshall, *Taxila*, Part II, p. 629.

14 *Gāthāsaptatī*, VI. 39 ; I. 80.

15 Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 629; Pl. 194a.

16 B. N. Puri, *India in the Time of Patañjali*, p. 105.

ornament. They were either spiral coils or consecutive circles of gold pieces set one over the other.

The above were the common ornaments of that time. The manufacturers of ornaments required different kinds of metals, gems and precious stones. What were their sources of precious metals like gold and silver, gems like pearls, rubies and diamonds and other materials like ivory? Ancient India was rich in mineral wealth and mining was an important industry.¹⁷ The major sources for gold were the following: Jambū river¹⁸ (near Mt. Meru), Śatakumbha (mountain), Hāṭaka, Veṇu (mountain), Śṛṅgaśukti (in Suvarṇabhūmi) and mines. Gold which is of the colour of lotus, glossy, glittering and incapable of making any sound was regarded as the best.

Silver was obtained from Tuttha,¹⁹ Gauḍa,²⁰ Kambu (mountain) and Cakravāla (mountain). Silver which was white, smooth, and soft was regarded as the best.

Some important sources of pearls are mentioned;²¹ e.g. Tāmraparṇī, Pāṇḍyakavāṭa, Mount Malayakoṭi in the Pāṇḍya country, Kulā (river near Mayūragrāma in Ceylon), Cūrṇī (river near the village of Muracī in Kerala), Mahendra (mountain), Kārdama (river in Pārasika in Konideśa), and Sortasī (river on the shore of Barbara). Pearls were also found in lakes and shells. Śīrṣaka, upaśīrṣaka, prakāṇḍaka, avaghāṭaka and taralapratibaddha are the varieties of pearl strings. Gems came from Koṭi (between Malaya and the sea), Māla²² and beyond the sea.

Diamonds came from Sabhārāṣṭra,²³ Tajjamārāṣṭra,* Kāstīrārāṣṭra,²⁴ Mt. Śrīkaṭanaka, near Sabalpur, Maṇimanta²⁵

17 J. C. Jain, *Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canons*, p. 98.

18 *Arthaśāstra*, II. B. 3 [sic—Ed.].

19 Tuttha is a mountain.

20 Gauḍa is the Kāmarūpa region. [Sic—Ed.]

21 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 11.4.

22 Mala is a part of Malaya. [Sic—Ed.]

23 Sabhārāṣṭra is Vidarbha.

*[Sic—Ed.]

24 Kāstīrārāṣṭra seems to be the same as Kāśī.

25 Maṇimanta is in Uttarāpatha.

and Indravāna.²⁶ Coral came from Alakanda and Vivarṇa.²⁷ Red and lotus-colour corals were the best. Touchstone came from the Tāpī and from Kaliṅga.

The Jātakas also refer to precious stones like pearls, diamonds, etc.²⁸ Regarding the transport of raw materials, Kauṭilya, who differs from earlier authorities, says that a land route is to be preferred to a water route. He argues that the former is open in all seasons and is fraught with comparatively fewer dangers which can be easily overcome. He also favours the route to the south as against the Himalayan route preferred by the earlier teachers. He regards the southern route as more profitable since it brings in many valuable commodities like pearls, diamonds, crouch-shells and plenty of gold. All mines were State property.

Early Buddhist literature also mentions the flourishing trade²⁹ of the goldsmiths who excelled in cutting and polishing ornaments³⁰ and in making girdles, necklaces, bracelets, etc. Usually golden plates were used for inscribing messages or sayings of importance. There were special villages for smiths. The ivory workers made ornaments like bangles, rings and other small articles with the help of a saw.³¹

Pāṇini suggests that the village smith, seated before his miniature cupola, had to deal with different kinds of orders,³² viz. fresh gold or silver in the shape of bars or ingot brought in order to be melted and shaped into new forms; and old ornaments brought to him in order to be repaired or brightened by heating to look like new. In the cases of bars and ingots, he subjected gold to repeated heating and expanded it by beating. The ornaments were heated only once in fire and either rubbed or immersed in a solution for making them look

26 Indravāna is near Kaliṅga.

27 Vivarṇa is off the Yavanadvīpa.

28 *Jātaka*, Vol. I, p. 197.

29 R. N. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India*, p. 197.

30 *Jātaka*, Vol. IV, p. 233.

31 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 320.

32 V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 234.

righter. Pāṇini mentions touchstones and suggests that the goldsmith heats gold only once in fire.³³

Besides the manufacture of ornaments, the goldsmith also performed the work of embedding, setting the gold, bead-making, plating and gilding. There was a rule for the servants, blowers and dust-washers that they should enter and leave only after their garments and hands and private parts were searched. And all their tools and incomplete works remained just there. The workers were to hand over the gold received. In the morning and evening, they kept gold articles marked with the seals of the maker and the overseer.³⁴

Setting, stringing, etc., were the methods of working in gold.³⁵ Setting is fixing or binding. Stringing is weaving in threads. Making solid or hollow articles or working with beads was regarded as minor work. In the work of setting, the goldsmith used one-fifth as fastening at the base and one-tenth as side-fastening. Silver with a quarter part of copper or gold with a quarter part of silver was artificial, and against that he had to be careful. In the work of fixing the beads, there should be three parts enclosing at the sides and four parts base or four parts base and three parts enclosing at the sides.*

A goldsmith plated an article of copper with an equal amount of gold. An article of silver, either solid or hollow, was covered with half the amount of gold ; or he gilded the silver article with one fourth part of gold by means of liquid or powdered sand vermillion.*

The technique employed by the jewellers of Taxila³⁶ was very much like that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. They made jewellery with the help of moulds and dies. Moulds of small size were in use at Taxila for the casting of metal ornaments from the 5th century B.C. Such a mould was used

33 VIII. 3.102.

34 *Arthaśāstra*, II. 13.33.

35 *Ibid.*, II. 13.34.

*[Sic—Ed.]

36 Marshall, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 617.

for making pendants.³⁷ Two types of stone moulds of a later date were used for making either solid or hollow pieces of jewellery. A closed mould was made of two or three pieces of stones fitted together and with a groove for pouring the metal in. The open mould for hollow items of jewellery was of one piece with no channel for inserting the metal.

In making ornaments with dies, the Taxila jewellers made bronze or copper dies first and pressed heavier gold and silver sheets on them, so that the jewellery was not very thin or flimsy. A large collection of such dies, evidently cast in moulds, was found amidst a jeweller's stock in trade in the Śaka-Parthian city of Sirkap. According to some authors, the gold and silver ornaments could not be satisfactorily cast in stone moulds of the kind described earlier and such moulds with channels were used only for the production of wax-mould models from which the metal casts were afterwards made. In Taxila, the moulds were used for the production of metal dies on which the more precious metals were beaten into shape preparatory to their being grooved and finished off by hand.

Gold and silver ornaments were sometimes endowed with filigree work. The Taxila jewellers adopted this method from the Graeco-Romans. This is effected by soldering fine wire to the surface of the metal, the wire, either plain or twisted, was beaded and plaited into a chain.

Incrustation, which was in vogue in Taxila in the 1st century A.D., was the direct outcome of Parthian occupation. For this, the gems were enclosed in small compartments contiguous to one another and covering the surface or were studded in cloisons or in box-setting.

For granulation, i.e. decoration of a gold surface with fine granules, the gold was melted and was deposited on a foil from where it was transferred to charcoal dust. This was to cause the granules to roll into perfect shape for soldering them to the ornaments. The jeweller used an alloy of gold and copper for controlling the granules and holding them in position by a

37 *Ibid.*, p. 509.

filament which was melted on the surface and disappeared without leaving any trace. The method was known to Greece, Egypt, Troy, Mycenae and other lands. It was continued in Greece and Italy down to Roman times.

The *Gāthāsaptatī*³⁸ refers to the technique as to how a particular stone was rubbed and cut into the required shape and was later subjected to some chemical action. Patañjali mentions *Suvarṇakāra*³⁹ whose profession was in a flourishing condition during the period in question.

Thus we find that the ornament Industry flourished well in ancient India. The rulers patronised it. The common people were also fond of ornaments and hence the industry prospered. Foreign influences helped in the invention of new designs and technique, which resulted in a variety of ornaments being produced. The whole industry was completely under royal control and patronage.* The same techniques are used even in modern times with minor changes, thus proving the continuity in our tradition.

38 *Gāthāsaptatī*, ed. S. A. Jogalekar.

39 B. N. Puri, *op. cit.*, pp. 118ff.

*[This can hardly be correct.—Ed.]

V

THE DHARMASŪTRAS ON TRADE

G. B. Upreti, Delhi University

The main sources which throw light on pre-Mauryan trade consist of the Dharmasūtras, the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and the early Pāli works.* Occasionally the Gṛhyasūtras, certain Jain works* and archaeological finds also supply some important information. The Dharmasūtras were an attempt of the priestly class to maintain their grip on the society. Therefore, they always vouchsafed strict adherence to the customs and established traditions, kinship organization and mental immobility, limited geographical knowledge and vicinal isolation, aversion to strangers and ethnocentrism. According to the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* the inhabitants of Avanti, Aṅga, Magadha, Surāṣṭra, the Deccan, Upāṇṭ, Sindhu and Sauvira were of mixed origin.¹ The same text enjoins that he who visited the Āraṭṭas, Kāraskaras, Puṇḍras, Sauviras, Vaṅgas, Kaliṅgas and Prāṇūnas should offer a *Punatoma* or a *Sarvaprṣṭhā*.² The contact with the Kaliṅgas was specially derided and the offender was instructed to perform the *Pavitresṭhi* sacrifice which was the best means of purification.³ Conversation and contact with the Mlecchas was declared undesirable and learning of other languages was derided.⁴ Sea-voyage and 'intercourse with persons, with whom intercourse is forbidden' was declared one of the most heinous offences

*[While no extant Pali work is pre-Mauryan, most of the Sūtra works are later than the Mauryas. Likewise, no Jain work can be assigned to pre-Maurya times.—Ed.]

1 *Bau. Dh.*, 1.2.13.

2 *Ibid.*, I. 2.14.

3 *Ibid.*, I. 2.15-16.

4 *Ibid.*, I. 2.13-17 ; *Āp. Dh.*, I. 32.18 ; *Gau. Dh.*, IX. 16. The *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* emphatically states, "Let him not learn a language spoken by barbarians" (VI. 64).

which resulted in the loss of *Varna*.⁵ Profession of usury was considered highly objectionable.⁶ Contempt for city life was exemplary. The *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* disallowed the study of the Veda in towns.⁷ Baudhāyana observes that even a virtuous person of subdued senses cannot attain salvation in a town for his whole body is soiled and eyes and mouth are filled with the dust of the town.⁸ The *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* instructed a *snātaka* not to visit towns frequently.⁹

But such attempts of the priestly class were doomed to failure and the people had entered into definite relations that were indispensable and independent of their will, the relations of production which corresponded to that stage of development of material productive forces. Even these Dharmasūtras along with the *Gṛhyasūtras* and *Śrautasūtras* inform us that technology was comparatively much more advanced. Arithmetic was well developed for calculations. Numerals from 1 to infinity are referred to ;¹⁰ the decimal system was known.¹¹ Acquaintance with arithmetical progression is attested by the reference to such fractional terms as *ardha* ($\frac{1}{2}$), *tṛtīya* ($\frac{1}{3}$), *pāda* ($\frac{1}{4}$), *śapha* ($\frac{1}{8}$) and *kalā* ($\frac{1}{16}$).¹² The art of writing was well known.¹³ Agricultural surplus was increasing

5 *Bau. Dh.*, II. 2.2. The 5th *śloka* of the same section prescribes this penance to shelve the *pātaniya-karman* : "They shall eat every fourth meal-time a little food, by at the time of the three libations (morning, noon and evening), passing [the day] standing and [the night] sitting. After the lapse of three years they throw their guilt." Cf. *Āp. Dh.*, I. 21.8. [Sic—Ed.]

6 *Ibid.*, I. 18.22, 27.10 ; *Gau. Dh.*, XV. 18 ; *Vas. Dh.*, II. 40-42, XIV. 3, etc.

7 Cf. Ram Gopal, *India of the Vedic Kalpasūtras*, Delhi, 1959, p. 150.

8 II. 6.33.

9 *Āp. Dh.*, I. 32.21.

10 *Āp. Śrau.*, XVI. 31.1 ; *Bau. Śrau.*, XVIII. 42 ; *Śāṅkh. Śrau.*, XV. 11.1-4. Cf. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-39.

11 Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 339. [The decimal system of expressing numbers was introduced about the fifth century A.D. long after the period of the Sūtras.—Ed.]

12 *Bau. Śrau.*, XVIII. 37. Cf. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 339, p. 351, note 96.

13 *Gau. Dh.*, XIII. 5 ; *Vas. Dh.*, XVI. 14.15. Cf. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

and along with it increased the volume of industry.¹⁴ The guild of the craftsmen was already an established institution.¹⁵ Thus the cereals, livestock, cloth, wool, herbs, metals, hides, salt, wood, agricultural implements, ropes, utensils, condiments, jewellery, perfumes, and arms might have formed the main articles of the trader's bag.¹⁶ The negative evidence proves trade in human beings, horses, medicines, honey, flesh, roots, substances used for glueing, fruits, flowers, substances from which spirituous liquor might be extracted.¹⁷ External trade is also referred to,¹⁸ but nothing is said about the commodities of import and export. References to various kinds of debts,¹⁹ deposits,²⁰ interests,²¹ measures and weights,²² coinage,²³ taxes and tolls,²⁴ and above all, the grant of

14 Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-38, 156-61, 163-64, 167, 170.

15 See *Gau. Dh.*, XI. 21-22. Cf. *Bau. Dh.*, I. 2.6-9; *Āp. Dh.*, II. 15.1; also *Gau. Dh.*, XI. 23-24.

16 Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

17 *Āp. Dh.*, I. 20.12; *Gau. Dh.*, VII. 9-15; *Vas. Dh.*, II. 24-29.

18 *Bau. Dh.*, I. 18.14 allows the king to deduct a choice article from the shipment of a trader. The same authority also refers to the peculiar custom of the Northerners to go to sea for trading purposes (I. 2.4).

19 *Gau. Dh.*, XIII. 41; *Vas. Dh.*, XVI. 31.

20 Open deposit (*nidhi*) and sealed deposit (*anvādhi*) are referred to in *Gau. Dh.*, XII. 42 and *Vas. Dh.*, XVI. 18.

21 Compound, periodical, stipulated, corporal, daily and pledged (*Gau. Dh.*, XII. 31-32). The normal rate of interest was 15% per annum (*ibid.*, XII. 26). Vasiṣṭha prescribes the same rates, but differs in details (II. 44-51). Cf. *Bau. Dh.*, I. 10.22f.

22 For details, see Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42.

23 *Niṣka* is undoubtedly used here in the sense of gold currency; but we do not know in which form, because no gold punch-marked coin has been recovered so far. *Śatamānas* of gold and silver are also mentioned. We hear, moreover, of silver *Niṣkas*. Coins like *Trimśanmāna*, *Catvāriṃśanmāna*, *Saptatimāna*, *Caturviṃśatimāna*, *Kṛṣṇala*, *Kākiṇī* and *Māṣa* are also mentioned. *Kārṣāpaṇa* is often mentioned and *Gau. Dh.*, X. 18, refers to a copper coin named *Kṛṣṇala* (Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-44). The existence of silver and copper coins is also attested by the *Aśṭādhyāyī*, early Buddhist and Jain literature, and the actual pieces in many denominations found in various places. [The evidence is doubtful in some cases.—Ed.]

24 *Gau. Dh.*, X. 25-27, 33, 35; *Vas. Dh.*, XIX.25; *Bau. Dh.*, I.18.14-15. Gautama prescribes 5% as sales duty (X.26) along with an article of merchandise for less than the market value to the king (X.35). Baudhāyana is not specific about the sales duty on indigenous goods; but on imported articles, he prescribes a 10% customs duty and allows the king to take a choice article.

permission to the Vaiśyas and in some cases even to the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, for trading and usury,²⁵ prove that trade was well grounded now. The existence of the merchants' and usurers' guilds,²⁶ the checking of weights and measurements,²⁷ references to carts (*mahānasa*) and boats along with their owners,²⁸ and a distinct reference to commercial debt²⁹ adds authenticity to the view. Such statements as "Even a virtuous person of subdued senses cannot attain salvation by residing in a town, for his whole body is soiled and eyes and mouth are filled with the dust of the town"³⁰ also show that the towns were quite noisy and dusty due to traffic of animals and vehicles.³¹ This also shows that the city life was vibrating with life and swelling with people.

In most of the cases, the word *nagara* is used in the sense of a city, but sometimes the word *pura* replaces it. The theory that 'Indo-Aryan cities like the Anglo-Saxon boroughs of old arose primarily out of a military necessity'³² has been discredited now, and the latest researches vouch for an economic basis.³³ Archaeological excavations also lend support to such a theory.³⁴ *Nagara* is used in contradistinction to *grāma* whereas *pura* is opposite to *janapada*. The use of *pura* does not signify a military base; even in the Vedic literature, it suggests a walled city rather than a military fort. In the Dharmasūtra literature, the term seems to have been used in the same sense.

25 *Āp. Dh.*, I. 20.11, 16; II. 10,7; *Gau. Dh.*, VII. 7.26; X. 5, 6, 49; *Vas. Dh.*, II. 19.22-24, 43; *Bau. Dh.*, I. 10.21, 25; II. 2.29.

26 *Gau. Dh.*, XI.23.

27 *Vas. Dh.*, XIX.13: "The measures and weights of objects necessary for households must be guarded [against falsification, by the king]".

28 *Gau. Dh.*, X.33. Cf. Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.

29 *Gau. Dh.*, XII.41.

30 *Bau. Dh.*, II.6,33.

31 Ram Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 150. [The reference may also be figuratively to the temptations of town life.—Ed.]

32 A. N. Bose, *op. cit.*, p. 157. [Sic—Ed.]

33 Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [Sic—Ed.]

34 Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-61. [Sic—Ed.]

The traders (*vaṇik*) and usurers (*kusīdin*) existed as two separate communities,³⁵ though they may have been closely interrelated. The Buddhist sources prove that a merchant could also act as a banker or *vice versa*, and the *seṭṭhi* of the Pāli works was certainly a merchant-banker. Even then, it can be presumed that a class existed which solely depended on money-lending. Thus the usurer's capital existed sometimes independent of the merchant's capital as in mediaeval Europe. Commercial debt is referred to ; but no special rate of interest, which seems a possibility, is anywhere specified. Gautama says that the heirs of a deceased [merchant or trader] were not obliged to pay back a commercial debt.³⁶ Thus it involved a double risk, and therefore, it is quite possible that the rate of interest for commercial debts was comparatively higher.

35 *Gau. Dh.*, IX.23.

36 *Ibid.*, XII.41 : "Money due to by a surety [sic—Ed.], a commercial debt, a fee [due to the parents of a bride], debts contracted for spirituous liquor or in gambling and a fine shall not involve the sons [of the debtor]".

VI

BEAD-MAKING INDUSTRY IN SOUTH INDIA

C. Krishnamurthy, Madras University

Beads of various materials were found very frequently in the ancient habitation and burial sites in South India. They were generally collected from the megalithic and early historic sites. However, the terracotta beads were not unknown to the Neolithic people. The earliest Tamil works known as the Sangam literature contain many references to the bead-making industry as also how people, both men and women, were fond of wearing necklaces, etc., composed of beads. The Sangam poets, while describing the beauty and youthfulness of young girls, never failed to mention the various types of ornaments that adorned their body, from head to foot. Among such ornaments beads are also mentioned. It is interesting to note that some of the semi-precious stone beads manufactured in the Tamil country attracted the Romans who visited the land in the early centuries of the Christian era. Tamil literature confirms to a large extent the fact that beads of semi-precious stones, particularly beryl, were one of the items of export from South India.¹ The pearls were also exported to Rome on a large scale.

The extensive explorations and chance diggings undertaken in South India during the last 200 years mostly in megalithic burial sites yielded thousands of beads of various materials such as gold, silver, copper, iron, bone and ivory besides different types of semi-precious stones like carnelian, jasper, agate, onyx, serpentine, steatite, magnesite, lapis lazuli, quartz, granulite, amethyst and tremolite, a form of horn-blende, glass, paste and wax, lacquer, terracotta, stalagmite and shell. Some of these beads were also collected from the habitation

1 K. K. Pillay, 'Maritime Trade of Early Tamil Nad' in *Hand Book*, Madras (1968), p. 114.

sites of the megalithic and early historic periods. For instance, the excavations conducted at Arikamedu (Pondicherry), Kaviripumpattinam (Tanjavur District), Tirukkampuliyur, Alagarai, Uraiyur (Tiruchirapalli District) and Kanchipuram (Chingleput District), all in Tamilnad, yielded numerous such beads.²

The beads formed part of the grave goods offered to the dead. They were worn by those who had died. It was believed that the dead may need them in their life after death.

The different types of beads, the modes of decoration seen on them suggest that the ancient people possessed a fairly advanced culture and took elaborate steps to decorate their bodies. They also throw light on the delicate technique of cutting different types of stones of varied degrees of hardness into small and required shapes, boring holes through them, polish them to different degrees of fineness, further decorate the same with etching of the carnelian specimens or carving grooves over them to produce some designs or collared edges.

The shapes of the beads may be grouped as follows. The semi-precious stone beads occur in tubular, barrel, biconical, spherical and round forms; collared beads are also not unknown. The gold beads are generally round or spherical while the glass beads are of various forms such as spherical, circular and tubular shapes. The paste beads are normally tubular while a few are spherical. The terracotta beads are the most interesting specimens bearing beautiful designs like concentric thin bands running round all over the body. They are spherical in shape with fine, smooth surface, sometimes bearing a micaceous slip. In some cases, the decorations include wavy lines and diamonds.

The carnelian beads are fewer in number, but bear evidence of high workmanship. They are sometimes etched in white over the natural red surface. The etched designs include double or single lines flanked by double lines each side or single

2 The excavations at the last few places were conducted by the Dept. of Archaeology, University of Madras.

zigzag lines within double parallel lines, longitudinal zigzag lines in four quadrants, oblique strokes enclosed within four quadrantal lines, three circles enclosing ovals in imitation of the eye, horizontal strokes enclosed within marginal bandy cross-designs and irregular circles enclosing a horizontal stroke. These etched carnelian beads are very important from the point of view of dating the associated objects. They are dated from *circa* 4th century B. C. as at Taxila to about the 2nd century A.D.

Very early we come across iron beads. A cist grave at Kodidhasinur near Karaimadai in the Coimbatore District yielded several iron beads.³ They are formed of small strips of iron coiled up like a volute spring.

A statistical analysis of the beads from various burials suggest that, at times, even a single grave yielded more than a hundred beads. The beads thus collected from various parts of South India are now deposited in various Museums in the country and quite a large number of them are missing and are not available for study.

With regard to the technique of manufacture much cannot be said at the present state of our knowledge. However, there are stray evidences to show how they were cut into required shapes and bored. For instance, in the excavation at Tirukkumpuliyur segmented glass beads without bore were found. They suggest that the paste or glass was melted to form thin rod-like shapes and later on the required shapes were cut at regular intervals and they were bored at one stretch and detached.⁴

It may also be pointed out that the smallest beads occur only in paste and glass. They are reported from a fairly earlier period, say 200 or 100 B. C. as at Taxila, as also at Kanchipuram and Tirukkampuliyur.⁵ They are very tiny, the

3 J. R. Sandford, *JASBOM*, Vol. 3, 1901, pp. 461-71.

4 The author participated in the excavations and examined the specimens.

5 The excavations at Kanchipuram are being conducted by the Dept. of Archaeology, University of Madras.

diameter and thickness being 1 mm. They are mustard-like in shape.

Among the beads from Tamil country, the corn-shaped ones, made of shell, deserve special mention. They were found in large number in the excavations at Tirukkampuliyur. Datable to c. 1st century A.D., they were found in a very fragile condition. They measured about 5 mms. in height and 4 mms. in diameter bearing thin walls. Some of them bear decorative grooves on one side. The fact that even such delicate beads were used as ornament in ancient Tamilnadu attests to the skill displayed for their manufacture in this part of the country in such an early period.

Thus we find that the bead-making industry was a flourishing one in the Tamil country in the few centuries before and after the commencement of the Christian era as it was in North India as evidenced by the discovery of large hoards in different stages of manufacture in the excavations at Taxila, Ujjain and other places.

VII

GUILDS IN ANCIENT INDIA AND
THE EVIDENCE OF COINS

Sm. Bela Lahiri, Jadavpur University

The institution of the guilds, which are corporate bodies of traders, merchants and artisans, is very ancient in India. Such organisations are denoted by various terms, the meaning of which are not always so clear.

It is suggested that the word *paṇi*, meaning 'merchant',* which occurs in the *R̥gveda*, perhaps indicates the existence of a sort of corporation of merchants. But it is highly doubtful if the merchants were then organised into guilds. The terms *gaṇa* and *vrāta*, which also find their place in the *R̥gveda* and which later on often signified corporate bodies of merchants, are not likely to denote guilds in the modern sense of the terms at such an early period. The occurrence, in the Brāhmaṇas, of the word *śreṣṭhin*, which means 'the head or president of a mercantile or other guild', evidently, however, suggests the emergence of corporate organisations of merchants and traders in the Later Vedic age. The Sūtra literature undoubtedly refers to guilds by the terms *gaṇa*, *pūga*, *vrāta* and *saṁgha*. Of them, *gaṇa* and *saṁgha* signified any kind of corporate body, either political or religious or even industrial. *Pūga*, which usually denoted a religious corporation, sometimes also meant a corporate body of merchants and artisans. The only undisputable word to signify a mercantile guild is *śreṇi*. Its Pali form, viz. *seṇi*, occasionally occurs in the Jātakas which give their conventional number as eighteen. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya contains many references to *śreṇis* and throws important light on their nature, powers and functions. Early Dharmaśāstras (like the *Manusmṛhitā* and the *Yājñavalkyasmṛhitā*) as well as the *Mahābhārata* show that guild-organisations not only

*[The Paṇis were a people engaged in trade.—Ed.]

became powerful, but were an important factor in the State shortly after the beginning of the Christian era. As is evidenced by the later Dharmaśāstras (like those of Nārada and Bṛhaspati), guild organisations developed considerably in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.

Epigraphical evidence also bears testimony to the fact that organisation of guilds became marked from the beginning of the Christian era. The Mathurā inscription of Year 28 (i.e., 106 A.D.), incised during the reign of Huviṣka, is probably the earliest to refer to such corporate bodies. It records the perpetual endowment to two guilds, one of which was that of flour-makers (*samitākara-śreṇi*). The Nasik cave inscription of the time of Nahapāna, dated in [Śaka] 42 or 120 A. D., refers to an investment with the guild of weavers (*kaulikanikāya*) at Govardhana.* Another Nasik epigraph of the year 9 of the Ābhira king Īśvarasena (third century A.D.) records the investment of endowments with the guilds of *kularikas* (potters?), *odayantrikas* (workers with water-pumps?) and *tilapisakas* (oil-millers). Two Buddhist cave inscriptions from Junnar speak of similar investments, one with a guild at Konācika, another with the guilds of *vasakāras* (bamboo-workers) and *kasakāras* (braziers), while a third Junnar inscription records the gift of a cave and a cistern by the guild of corn-dealers. A Nagarjunikonda inscription, dated 333 A. D., likewise informs us of investments with several guilds of which two belonged to the *Paṇikas* (probably sellers or growers of betel-leaves) and *Puvikas* (confectioners). The Sanchi epigraph, numbered C 189, refers to the collective gift of the ivory-workers of Vidiśā. The Mandasor inscription of Kumārgupta I and Bandhuvarman, dated in the Mālava years 493 and 529 (i.e. 436 and 473 A.D.), records the construction of a Sun-temple by a guild of silk-weavers who migrated from Lāṭa (South Gujarat) to Daśapura or Mandasor. Epigraphic records

*[There were really two investments in two different guilds of weavers of Govardhana.—Ed.]

thus throw a welcome light on the existence, nature and function of guilds in ancient India.

Several factors contributed to the growth of guild organisations. First, the localisation of industries played a great part in the development of guilds. Separate hamlets or particular quarters in suburbs of towns were earmarked for particular industries, and they were designated by the names of the localised industries. Secondly, the industry of a particular locality was organised under a leader called *Jeṭṭhaka* (*Jyeṣṭhaka*) or *Pamukha* (*Pramukha*). When a village consisted mainly of the followers of a particular localised industry the office and functions of the village headman were vested in the leader of the guild. Thirdly, the trade or craft was usually hereditary. This feature was, however, more marked in the case of artisans than in the case of traders and merchants. The son of an artisan took to the craft of his father, thus putting hereditary skill in the particular industry.

The most important factor was the existence of certain rules and regulations binding the guilds. Kauṭilya refers to rules relating to workmen of co-operative undertakings or guilds, and privileges granted to them along with punishments for infringement of such rules. It is interesting to note what Kauṭilya says about the profits of guilds. He lays down that 'guilds of workmen (*saṃghabhṛtaḥ*) as well as those who carry on any co-operative work shall divide their earnings either equally or as agreed upon among themselves'.

It appears that, by the beginning of the Christian era, almost all the important industries were organised into corporate bodies. Though the Jātakas make frequent mention of eighteen guilds, the actual number of guilds by far exceeded that number. The *Jeṭṭhaka* or *Pamukha* (i.e. the headman of a guild), as frequently referred to in the Jātakas, received regular allowances. According to Kauṭilya, the pay of a *Śreṇimukhya* (chief of guild) should be equal to that of the chiefs of elephants, horses and chariots. The guilds were entitled to joint ownership of land. Kauṭilya, however, was

against the colonisation of waste land by Industrial or other corporate bodies, since they are ,intolerant of calamities and susceptible to anger and other passions'. The Mandasor inscription testifies to the mobility of guilds. It describes how members of a silk-weavers' guild, when fallen into distress, migrated from Lāṭa to Daśapura ; and while some of them carried on their own profession, some others took to those of music, story-telling, religious discourses, astrology or arms. It is noteworthy that, in spite of these distractions all the [original] members of the guild kept up the corporate nature of their organisation.

The guilds had both executive and judicial powers. They could arbitrate in cases of dispute between their members and their wives. One of the most important functions of the guild was to serve as local banks. It not only received deposits at interest and acted as a trustee and executor of endowments, but also lent out money. As already seen, the Nasik, Junnar and Nagarjunikonda inscriptions refer to such endowments in guilds. Kauṭilya, in connection with the measures to be taken by the king in order to collect money in times of need, says that a king could employ a spy who would 'borrow from corporations bar gold, or coined gold for various kinds of merchandise to be procured from abroad'. "After having done this, he may allow himself to be robbed of it the same night." This indicates that the guilds used to lend money. They also took interest in religious activities. For, the Mandasor inscription records the construction of a Sun-temple by the guild of silk-weavers, and its restoration by the same guild some 36 years later when it fell into disrepair. Similarly, a Sanchi inscription, as already noted, mentions the gift of a guild of ivory-makers of Vidiśā.*

Even though autonomous in nature, the guilds had a close relationship with the king. They exerted great influence on the king and their heads often held high posts in the State, being consulted in all important matters and playing the role

* [There is no mention of a 'guild' of ivory-workers in the record.—Ed.]

of assessors in judicial matters. The king, on the other hand, acted as the guardian of the guilds. Kauṭilya refers to the Superintendents of Accounts who had regularly to register 'the history of customs, professions, and corporations of countries, villages, families, and transactions'. He also speaks of three commissioners who would receive the deposits of guilds, to be taken back by them in times of distress. One of the Jātaka stories refers to a State officer called *Bhāṇḍāgārika* who had, among his duties, to settle the disputes between the different heads of guilds. In case of a dispute between a guild and its head or one of its members, the king had to arbitrate. The corporation of artisans and handicraftsmen (*kāruṣilpi-gaṇa*) had to pay regular tribute, which was one of the most important sources of revenue for the king. We have already seen how Kauṭilya lays down unscrupulous measures to collect money from the guilds, when the king was in financial trouble.

It appears from various evidences that the guilds were powerful enough to protect themselves and probably also maintained an army of their own. Kauṭilya refers to *śreṇi-bala* among the various classes of troops which the king might employ for offensive and defensive purposes. He further suggests that in order to keep the enemy in suppression, a *śreṇi-bala* should be furnished 'with a piece of land constantly under troubles from an enemy', presumably to keep the fighting forces of the corporation engaged, so that they might not be a source of trouble for the king himself. *Śreṇi-bala* is also mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. There is, however, some difference of opinion as to the exact significance of the term. R. Shamasastri translated it as 'a corporation of soldiers' (without any reference to trade or industry), while D. R. Bhandarkar takes it to mean 'soldiers maintained by the guild'. According to R. C. Majumdar, it signifies 'a class of guilds which followed some industrial arts, and carried on military profession at one and the same time'. Now, Kauṭilya refers to a class of Kṣatriya *śreṇis* whose profession was trade and war (*vārtā-śastr-opajīvinaḥ*)* and who were mainly found in

*[See above, p. 5.—Ed.]

Kāamboja and Surāṣṭra countries. The Mandasor inscription also bears evidence to the fact that some of the members of the guild of silk-weavers took to arms. Thus there is no impossibility in the trade-guilds having military forces.

The Basarh seals of the Gupta period give us further information about the nature of guilds. They bear legends like *śreṣṭhi-sārthavāha-kulika-nigama*, etc. The word *nigama*, as used in connection with bankers (*śreṣṭhin*), traders (*sārthavāha*) and merchants (*kulika*),* appears to signify a town-corporation consisting mainly of mercantile guilds. The guilds had their own banners or colours. The *Mahābhārata* refers to the city of Mithilā which was ruled over by Janaka and 'adorned with flags of various guilds'.

That the *nigamas* were town-corporations consisting mainly of various trade-guilds is also borne out by numismatic evidence. The earliest inscribed coins of Taxila having the legends, *Negamā* on the obverse and *Dojaka, Tālimata* (or *Rālimasa*), *Atakatakā*, etc., on the reverse, are interpreted by Allan as 'mercantile money token issued by traders', or 'trade token', or 'coin of commerce'. D. R. Bhandarkar, however, takes the word *nigama* (Skt. *naigamaḥ*) in its ordinary sense, i.e. a city, and according to him, the *Negamā* coins indicated a sort of democracy, which was confined to a town, and the names on the reverse, viz. *Dojaka, Tālimata*, etc., signify that 'they were really civic coins struck by the peoples of these cities'. But Allan has pointed out that the expressions like *nagara-nigama-janapada* (occurring in the Junagarh inscription) and *grāma-nagara-nigama* (as found in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*) 'suggests that the *nigama* is an area larger than a town, perhaps a market district'. According to him, the *Negamā* coins were the issues of market quarters or market districts. Besides, if *nigama* denoted a city, then it would not have been mentioned along with *nagara* which also signified a town or city.**

*[*Kulika* is not a merchant, but probably an artisan.—Ed.]

**[We may take *nigama* in the sense of 'a township' and *naigama* in that of 'a merchant' or better 'a mercantile guild'.—Ed.]

As known from Kauṭilya, different quarters were allocated for different industries in a well-planned town. It may happen that some towns were mainly industrial and were inhabited by followers of different crafts and trade, organised into guilds. The *Negamā* coins of Taxila might have been issued by such an industrial town and the names on the reverse might signify the various trade quarters. The occurrence of the steelyard balance on the reverse of some of the *Negamā* issues also suggests their connection with commercial transactions. Another class of Taxila coins with the legend, *Pañcanekame* on the reverse is also interesting in this connection. They appear to be the issues of a confederation of five *naigamas*, presumably signifying a combination of five market quarters and not of five towns. It is curious that names that occur on the reverse of the *Negamā* coins from Taxila number 'five', and we do not know if the *Pañcanekama* coins were the joint issues of the said five *nigamas* who had also their separate currencies. Taxila, as is well known, was a great commercial centre and lay on the route connecting India with the outer world by land. Hence it is but natural that the various trade guilds in the Taxila region would be powerful enough to have their own monetary issues.

Kauśāmbī, another great commercial centre, has also recently yielded three varieties of coins with the legend *Nagama*. Since the city-coins of Kauśāmbī bear the name of the city itself (*Kosabī*), these *Negamā* pieces were presumably the monetary issues of corporations of merchants and traders.* Some other coins coming from Kauśāmbī bear the legend *Gadhikana* (Skt. *Gāndhikānām*) which has been interpreted to signify the guild of the Gāndhikas or perfume-dealers. The dealers of perfume played an important role in the city-life and Kauṭilya located merchants trading in scents, garlands, etc., on the eastern side of an ideal city. The discovery of similar other coins may throw further light on the organisation of guilds in ancient India.**

*[Both the types of coins could have been issued by the mercantile guilds of Kauśāmbī.—Ed.]

**[It is unfortunate that references to texts have not been specifically indicated in this article.—Ed.]

VIII

TRADE AND COMMERCE IN THE AMARAKOŚA

Balram Srivastava, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

The *Amarakośa* provides a fascinating study from the economic point of view. The words of the *kośa*, providing not only different shades of meanings, throw a wealth of information pertaining to the study of the culture of the time, including trade and commerce.

Trade and commerce in the *Amarakośa* are denoted by the term *vāṇijya* (11.9.79 ; 11.2.9), which is described as the third element of *vārtā* and has been explained as *saty-ānṛtaṁ vaṇig-bhāvaḥ* (11,9.3). Similar explanation is also given in the *Manusmṛti*. There it is said that, among the Vaiśya's occupations, part is true and part untrue and trade is *saty-ānṛta*, and therefore it is recommended for the Vaiśyas to be followed.

Different types of traders are mentioned in the following verses :

vaidehakaḥ sārthavāho naigamo vāṇijo vaṇik/
paṇy-ājīvo hy=āpaṇikaḥ kraya-vikrayikaś=ca saḥ//
vikretā syād=vikrayikaḥ krāyika-krayikausamau/(11.9.78-79)

The word *vaidehaka* in the *Arthaśāstra* is explained by Shamasastri as 'a pedlar required to sell the merchandise of the king at a fixed price in many markets'. This would suggest that the *vaidehaka* specialized in the produce of the State. But this might be true in the Mauryan times, when State-owned economy was not so rigid, a *vaidehaka* being a touring trader having no such restrictions.

Technically speaking, the *sārtha* system of ancient Indian traders was also a form of the ancient Indian economic guilds.* It was a mobile corporation constituted essentially by traders for common protection, particularly

*[A caravan of traders was not a guild.—Ed.]

when they were in transit for trade. Such a company of traders (*sārtha*) was led by a leader called *sārthavāha*.¹ See Kṣīrasvāmin who explains the term as *s-ārthān sa-dhanān sarato vā pānthān vahati sārthavāhaḥ*. Vandyaghaṭīya says : *sārtham vaṇik-saṅghātām vahati deśāntaram prāpayat=īti karmany=ani sārthavāhaḥ*. Here *deśāntaram* suggests extra-territorial commerce which was carried on by the *sārthavāhas*.

As against this system, *naigama* belonged to a class of traders who did their business properly settled in the town and enjoyed privileges and autonomy to the extent that they could issue seals and coins in the name of their city (*nigama*). According to Kṣīrasvāmin, *nigamo vaṇik-patham=asya nivāso vā*. A city-trader would be the appropriate meaning of a *naigama*. In the *Nānārthavarga* section of the *Kośa*, *nigama* is a synonym to *pura* and *vaṇikpatha*, and *naigama* has been described as *nāgaro vaṇik* (III. 3.140). *Naigama* has also been explained as guild-trader by modern scholars.² Thus the word would mean a trader belonging to a guild-town situated in a particular locality or a market-town.

We may here refer to Pāṇini's *Sūtra* : *saṁsthāne vyaharati*.^{*} V. S. Agrawala had shown that *saṁsthānika* was a member of a commercial guild (*saṁsthāna*) mentioned in the *Jātakas*. He also suggests the identification *saṁsthānika* with the *sārthika* or *sārthavāha*.³ But it would be appropriate if *saṁsthānika* is understood to be a guild-trader and identified with the *naigama* of the *Amarakośa*. It is also to be noted that *nigama* has significantly been given as a synonym of *sthānika*, besides others (II.2.1). This *sthānika*, as will be seen elsewhere, denotes local market or guild market situated in a particular locality.

1 According to Vandyaghaṭīya, *nigamaḥ puṭabhedanaḥ, tatra bhavo jāto vā naigamaḥ*.

2 Bloch in *ASI, AR*, 1903-04 p. 104 ; R. K. Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India*, p. 112 ; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures*, 1918, p. 170 ; etc.

^{*}[IV.4.72—*kaṭhin-ānta-prastāra-saṁsthāneṣu vyavaharati*.—Ed.]

3 Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 238.

We have no special meaning for *vāṇija* and *vaṇik* as well as for *paṇyājīva*. All these are for traders⁴ whose livelihood depends on commodities (cf. Kṣīrasvāmin). But if a far-fetched meaning is permitted, *paṇyājīva* may be taken to mean the stockist. *Āpaṇika* is 'a shop-keeper.' *Āpaṇa* occurs in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (III.3.119) and denotes a place of business. *Kraya-vikrayika* is explained by Kṣīrasvāmin as the person engaged in sale and purchase. But if any special meaning is suggested, it may be a person who purchases the commodities directly from the producers and sells them to the consumers.

As the main feature of trade and commerce is *kraya* and *vikraya*, it requires two parties, viz. the seller and the purchaser. Both have been referred to in the *Kośa* (II. 9.79) as *vikretr* or *vikrayika* and *krayika* or *krāyika*. A seller or *vikretr*, according to Kṣīrasvāmin, is a person who sells the commodity by accepting price for it and a purchaser is one who gets a commodity (*bhāṇḍa*) by paying a price.

The price is denoted by *mūlya*, *vasna* and *avakraya* (II.9.74). It has two elements, viz. capital and profit. The first is denoted by *nīvī*, *paripaṇa* and *mūladhana* and the other by *lābha*, *adhika* and *phala* (II.9.80). *Nīvī* is fixed capital deposited in the form of money probably with some trader or trade-guild. Here the capital amounts were received as fixed deposits and interest or profit out of the deposit was paid to the beneficiary or depositor. In the context, we are reminded of the Nasik guilds where heavy investments were made in the form of *Nīvī*.⁵ The *paripaṇa* appears to be a kind of non-monetary investment, probably in the form of goods as suggested by Kṣīrasvāmin. *Mūla* is the actual investment forming the basis of profit. Similarly, the proceeds over the capital is profit.

Traders indulged in various business practices. Besides the usual sale and purchase, exchange and barter are mentioned (II.9.81). Simple exchange, i.e., giving or taking of a thing for another was *paridāna* and *parivarta*; but when

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238; see *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, III. 3.53, VI. 2.13.

⁵ *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXI, p. 10; A. N. Bose, *Social and Rural Economy*, pp. 348-49.

exchange was done for profit through barter and not through any medium of money and currency, it was *nimāna* which was therefore barter involving exchange of commodities.⁶

Pāṇini refers to barter as *nimāna* (V.2.47), the *Sūtra* seeking to regulate the grammatical formation expressing the barter ratio, on the formula that the price of portion of one thing is equal to so many portions of the other.⁷ The distinction between *naimeya* and *nimaya* is explained by Kṣīravāmin. *Nimāna*, besides being a term for barter, is technically a commodity given as price to receive another which is *nimeya*. The valuation is to be determined on the basis of *nimeya* (the thing to be bought) with several portions of *nimāna* (the thing to be given in exchange). We have referred elsewhere to Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* on this *Sūtra*, one of which gives the basic principle of barter that the valuation of *nimāna* as well as *nimeya* should always be equal.⁸ Patañjali rejects the *Vārttikas* on the ground that they were out of use in his time and says that the distinction between *nimāna* and *nimeya* is fictitious.⁹ But Kaiyaṭa finds some justification for making a distinction between the two and suggests that their relationship may be determined on the basis of *deśa* and *kāla*.¹⁰

Upanidhi, *nyāsa* and *satyāpaṇa* are mentioned in the *Amarakośa* (II.9.81,83). Kṣīrasvāmin suggests that *upanidhi* was a transaction made in secrecy, while *nyāsa* was a dealing in public, i.e. an open deposit in trust. It is, however, clearly pointed out that the business involving *upanidhi* and *nyāsa* is complete when the deposit is returned to the owner. Suretyship, as mentioned in the *Kośa* (II.9.82), was an important element of ancient Indian trade.

The *Amarakośa* mentions all sorts of commercial products, i.e. plants, animals and mineral produce. The traders then

6 B. Srivastava, *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India*, p. 307.

7 Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

8 B. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 308.

10 *Loc. cit.*

dealt with luxury goods as well as low-price commodities of day to day use. The words *krayya*, *kreya* and *vikreya* denote classifications of commodities. The articles arranged and displayed in the shop were known as *krayya* (see II.9.82 and the commentary of Kṣīrasvamin who quotes Pāṇini, VI.1.82). The word *kreya* means any article, whether fit to be kept in shop or not, meant for sale ; but a thing of definite salable value is *vikreya* (II. 9.82).

We have some reference to weights and measures¹¹ as well as of money economy. While there is no specific mention of any particular trade-route, there is enumeration of twelve kinds of routes (II.1.141) as well as *vaṇikpatha* denoting trade route (III.3.140). A Maritime trader is referred to as *saṁyātrika* and *pota-vaṇik* (I.10.12).

The *kośa* refers to three kinds of ocean-going ships, viz. *vānapātra*, *pota* and *sāmudrika* (I. 6.13). Other minor types of vessels particularly useful for local trade are mentioned as *droṇi* (II.10.11), *nau* (II.10.10), *uḍupa*, *plava* and *kola* (II.10.11). According to V.S, Agrawala, *uḍupa* was a small boat of half-moon shape.¹² It also occurs in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (IV.4.4), and the *Bhāṣya* mentions a fleet of 500 *uḍupas* (V.1.59).¹³ The *Āṅgavijjā*, which classifies water transport (*jalacarāṇi*) according to their sizes, describes *nāva* and *pota* as most commodious (*mahāvākāsa*)¹⁴ and *plava* as a middle-size boat (*majjhimakāya*). The size of *kola* is difficult to determine. Ferry-tax is mentioned as *tarapaṇya* and *ātara* (I.10.11).

Every *pura* and *nagara* had some commercial activity ; but the *paṭṭana*, *puṭabhedana* and *nigama* were the places where thriving business took place. *Paṭṭanas* were the trade centres probably on the land-route. The *Divyāvadāna* clearly separates them from the *samudra-paṭṭanas*, i.e. trading-towns or ports on the coastal routes. *Puṭabhedana* is an emporium and *nigama*

11 See my note contributed to *JNSI*, Vol. XXXIII.

12 *Op. cit.*, p. 156.

13 *Patañjali Kālīn Bhārat* (Hindī), p. 241.

14 *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

a guild-town. Another word, *sthānīya*, indicated a market of local significance, probably of perishable goods. Some big market-towns (*mūlanagara*) had their branches in the suburbs referred to as *śākhā-nagara* and *upanagara*. Important big towns of commercial and industrial significance had *āpaṇas*, places of business in a city (II.2.2), and store-houses known as *niṣadyā* (II.2.2). Some towns had streets especially apportioned for the sale and purchase of different commodities. Such streets were known as *paṇya-vīthī* (II.2.2). We are reminded of *dantakāra-vīthī*, *tanta-vīthī*, etc., of the Jātakas and similarly apportioned streets at Sākala described in the *Milindapañha*.¹⁵

Thus we see that the *Amarakośa* is a mine of information regarding trade and commerce in ancient India.

15 B. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

IX

ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONS OF SOME
SOUTH INDIAN GUILDS

O. P. Verma, Nagpur University

In the vast structure of South Indian economic system during the mediaeval period, guilds played a significant role in the development of trade and industry. On the one hand, they traded in various commodities and earned considerable profits ; on the other, they filled the coffers of the State which needed their help most. There was nothing unique in it as it was one of the normal functions of the guilds, accepted as a general rule down the ages. But what is interesting about these guilds is that they maintained their own militia and had complete freedom to do whatever they liked in recovering the dues from their clientele, with full connivance of the feudal lords.

In our study of the South Indian guilds, we come across two types, viz. craftsman-guild and merchant-guild. While the former consisted of the artisans who followed the same vocation, e.g., the guilds of weavers or oil-mongers, the latter comprised the traders who traded in commodities produced by the former. In other words, we have vocational guilds and tradesman-guilds. Although the membership of the caste-guild or vocational guild was generally open to all the *varṇas*,* in practice it largely consisted of members who had been born into the caste which had been allotted a specific vocation. The Arab chronicler Sulaiman¹ informs us that in all the kingdoms, he had seen, the profession never went out of the caste. A very good example of the influence of heredity in the choice of occupation is an inscription² dated the 48th year of

*[It is difficult to believe that caste guilds were usually open to the members of different communities.—Ed.]

1 Elliot and Dowson, *Hist. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 6.

2 *ARE*, 1909, Pt. ii, para. 45 ; No. 479 of 1908.

Tribhuvanacakravarti-Kulottuṅgacholadeva, which defines the occupation for a whole caste, called the Rathakāras. The inscription lays down the following means of livelihood by the Rathakāras : (1) architecture ; (2) building of coaches ; (3) erecting of *gopurams* of temples with images on them ; (4) preparation of instruments required by the Brāhmaṇas in their sacrificial ceremonies such as ladle ; (5) building *maṇḍapas*, and (6) making jewels for kings, such as diadems, bracelets, etc.

The inscription interestingly states that such occupations for the castes were carried on by the caste Brāhmaṇas on the strength of old authorities such as Yājñavalkya, Gautama, Kauṭilya, Bodhāyana and others.* Thus the guild consisted usually of persons of the same ethnic and sectarian caste ; but when the same trade was pursued by men of different castes, as sometimes happened, the guild would include all without reference to caste. That such a state of things continued to exist until the modern times is corroborated by Birdwood³ who remarks that the trade guilds of the great polytechnical cities of India are not always exactly coincident with the sectarian or ethnical caste of a particular class of artisans.

It is imperative at this stage to mention a few craftsman-guilds. They are : (1) Vira-pañcālas, including among them goldsmiths, coiners, carpenters and masons,⁴ (2) weavers, (3) oil-mongers, (4) gardeners, (5) stone-cutters, (6) braziers, (7) rope-makers, (8) jewellers, (9) porters, (10) basket-makers, (11) mat-makers, (12) toddy-makers, and (13) tailors.

It is interesting that the Vira-pañcālas, or Kanmālars as they were also known, who seem to have been well-organised,

*[The Rathakāra or carpenter was the offspring of a Māhiṣya from a Karaṇi or of a Vaidehaka from a Kṣatriyā. Besides the carpenters, the Rathakāra community included the blacksmiths, goldsmiths and stone-masons in the records of the Coḷa age, which also call them Brahma-Vaiśya, i.e. having the blood of Brāhmaṇa and Vaiśya in their veins. See Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Anc. Med. Ind.*, Vol. I, p. 115 note ; Sastri, *The Coḷas*, 2nd ed., p. 549 ; Yājñavalkya, I.95 with the *Mitākṣarā* thereon.—Ed.]

3 Birdwood, *Industrial Arts*, p. 138.

4 *Ep. Carn.*, Vol. IV, Chamarajanagar 119 ; Vol. IX, Bangalore 12.

had a mythological legend of their origin.⁵ They traced their descent from Viśvakarman, the son of Brahman, who is stated to have converted the rays proceeding from the Sun into divine weapons, such as the discus of Viṣṇu, etc. Elsewhere they trace their ancestry to the five sons of Viśvakarman, of whom the first born, Manu, worked in iron ; the second, Maya, in wood : the third Tvaṣṭram, in brass, copper and alloy ; the fourth, Śilpī, in stone ; and the fifth, Viśvajña, was a gold- and silver-smith and jeweller.⁶

It is seen from the *Mitākṣarā*⁷ that the guild was given a recognised legal status. It states that the *śreṇīs* could act as law-courts to decide cases ; they could be utilised as courts of appeal from the *kulas*. We are also told that the rules governing the *śreṇīs* were expected to be written down.⁸

The guilds enjoyed certain privileges, such as possessing the honour of a palanquin and a conch-shell,⁹ permission to build two-storeyed houses, to have double-doors, to decorate the outside of their houses with garlands of water-lilies and the freedom to live in the street without fear.¹⁰

The terms used in the South Indian inscriptions to denote the merchants' guilds are *ubhaya-nānādeśi*,¹¹ *baṇajiga*¹² *vaḷaṇṇijiyar* of the eighteen countries,¹³ *vaiśya-vāṇiya-nagarattār*,¹⁴ *mummuridaṇḍa*,¹⁵ *samasta-nakhara-mummuridaṇḍa*,¹⁶ *javara*, *gātriga*, *seṭṭi*, *seṭṭigutta*, *aṅka-kāra*, *bīra-vaṇiga*,¹⁷ and the *svāmis* of Ayyāvoḷe,¹⁸ Maṇigrāmam,¹⁹ etc.

5 ARE, 1910, Part ii, para. 60, No. 575 of 1909.

6 Coomarswamy, *The Indian Craftsmen*, p. 56.

7 Vijñāneśvara's *Mitākṣarā* on Yāj., II. 30.

8 Yāj., II. 22.

9 ARE, 1925, No. 422.

10 *Ibid.*, 1905, No. 136, Part ii, para. 45.

11 ARM, 1919, p. 33 ; *Ep. Carn.*, Vol. V, Arkalgud 68.

12 ARM, 1925, 89.

13 *Ep. Carn.*, Vol. I, p. 8.

14 *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, Hoskote 50.

15 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, p. 30.

16 *Loc. cit.*

17 *SHI*, Vol. II, p. 460.

18 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVI, p. 332.

19 *Ibid.*, Vol., XVIII, p. 69.

The exact significance of these terms, and the distinction between them is not clearly made out. But the description of some of them is quite interesting and hence they deserve a special mention.

Of all the guilds mentioned above, the guild of Ayyāvoḷe occupies a prominent place in the economic structure of South India. The guild finds mention in several inscriptions spread over more than seven centuries. The earliest reference to it is in a Kannaḍa inscription²⁰ from Aihole belonging to the eighth century A.D. The guild is usually referred to as '500-Svāmis of Ayyāvoḷe, the best of cities'. A full *praśasti* of the guild appears in an inscription²¹ of 1054 A.D from the Shikarpur Taluk of the Shimoga District. We learn from the *praśasti* that this body of men were the protectors of the Vīra-Baṇaṇju-dharma, i.e. the law of the noble merchants, *Baṇaṇju* being a form of Sanskrit *vaṇik* or *vaṇij*, 'a merchant'. This *dharma* was embodied in 500 Vīra-śāsanas, 'edicts of the heroes'. They had the picture of a hill on their flag and were noted for their daring enterprise throughout the world. They claimed descent from Vāsudeva, Khaṇḍali and Mūlabhadra and were followers of the creeds of Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. Among the countries they visited were Cera, Cola, Pāṇḍya, Malaya, Magadha, Kausala, Saurāṣṭra, Dhanuṣṭra, Kurumba, Kamboja, Ekapāda, Lambakarna. Strīrājya and Gholāmukha, some of the names of the countries, e.g. the last four, being quite interesting. They travelled by both land and water-routes, penetrating all the countries of the six continents. They traded in magnificent elephants, horses of the finest breeds, sapphires, moonstones, pearls, rubies, diamonds, lapis-lazuli, onyx, topaz, carbuncles, emeralds and other precious articles such as cardamoms, cloves, bdellium, sandal, camphor, musk, saffron and other spices and perfumes. They sold these articles wholesale or hawked with the articles on their shoulders. They paid the

20 Fleet, 'Sanskrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions', *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VI, p. 138.

21 *Ep. Carn.*, Vol. VII, Sk. 118-19 ; Fleet, *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. X, p. 189 ; see Vol. V, p. 342.

suñka regularly, filled the royal treasury with gold and jewels, and replenished the armoury. They bestowed gifts on the *paṇḍitas* and sages fully versed in the four *samayas* and the six *darśanas*.

From the above description, it appears that the guild at Ayyāvoḷe was well-organised, with activities spreading over 32 sea-side towns and 19 cities. They were united by a belief in common descent from Vāsudeva and by a feeling that one of their primary duties was to preserve the tenets of the Vira-Baṇaṇjuga-dharma and to spread them as well.

The most important personages of the Vira-Baṇaṇjigas were constituted into a Board which was called the 500-Svāmis of Ayyāvoḷe. How the Board was constituted is not known, but that it was more or less a permanent body may be seen from the references to the 500-Svāmis in the inscriptions ranging from the eighth to the seventeenth century A. D. It is likely that the term '500-Svāmis' has some connection with the 500 edicts said to be strictly adhered to, or it may be interpreted to mean 500 merchants who had acquired the title *Vīra* by dint of their adventure and hard work.

The guild or 500-Svāmis of Ayyāvoḷe included many other classes of merchants, viz., *gāvasa*, *gātriga*, *seṭṭi*, *seṭṭigutta*, *aṅkakāra*, *gaṇḍiga*, *gāvunḍa* and *gāvunḍa-svāmi*. It was indeed a federation or corporation of all kinds of merchants. The market town of the Vira-Baṇaṇju was known as Baṇaṇju-vaṭṭana or Baṇaṇju-paṭṭana. Kurumbetta, Hulgur and Belligrāma were important market-towns of this mercantile class besides Ayyāvoḷe. The members of the guild had a chief who was called *Paṭṭaṇa-svāmi*.²²

Another merchant-guild of importance was Maṇigrāmam. It was a corporation of merchants like the one at Ayyāvoḷe. The activities of this guild extended over a wide area.²³ It had centres at various places, inland as well as coast, extending

22 *Ep. Carn.*, Vol. VII, Sk 95.

23 *Trav. Arch. Series*, II, 9, ii, lines 24-25 ; *SII*, Vol. IV, No. 147; *ARE*, 1917, No. 439 of 1917 ; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 71.

its activities even to Arabia, Egypt and the Far East. Membership of the guild was open to all merchants, irrespective of their religion.

The members of the guild enjoyed certain privileges. In the Kottāyam plates²⁴ of Vīra-Rāghava, certain honours and privileges were granted to the head of the guild, such as the right of proclamation, forerunners, the five musical instruments, a conch-shell, a lamp in day time, a cloth spread over in front to walk on, a palanquin, the royal parasol, a gateway with an ornamental arch, and monopoly of trade in four quarters. The oil-mongers and the five-classes of artisans were made his slaves,* and it was expressly declared that the grant was not personal, but hereditary. They were the veritable masters of their trade, given full liberty to do whatever they liked—even to the extent of withholding the tribute to their feudal lord, in the event of any injustice done to them. They could even order investigation into their own crimes.²⁵

The guilds were often entrusted by their feudal lords to the governance of towns and cities. The reason for handing over the administration of certain cities to the guilds may have been due to the fact that the latter advanced loans to the State treasury from time to time. As a security for these loans, towns like Ayyāvoḷe seem to have been put in charge of the guilds by the debtor State. They also maintained their militia. In a Kolhapur record²⁶ dated Śaka 1058, members of the guild have been described as 'persons whose breast was embraced by the goddess of perfect impetuosity and bravery.' Another reason why the guilds had to maintain their own forces was to safeguard their goods, while being transported from one place to another.

Marco Polo, the Italian geographer of the thirteenth century A.D., writes the following about the merchants of

24 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 290ff.

*[Probably 'servants' or 'subordinates' is meant. —Ed.]

25 Gundert, 'Ancient Documents', *Madras Journal*, Vol. XIII, Part I, pp. 123-25.

26 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XIX, p. 33.

Southern and Western India, whom he calls Abraiman. According to him, they 'are the best merchants in the world, and the most truthful, for they would not tell a lie for anything on earth'. "If a foreign merchant, who does not know the ways of the country, applies to them and entrusts his goods to them, they will take charge of these, and sell them in the most loyal manner, seeking zealously the profit of the foreigner and asking no commission except what he pleases to bestow. They eat no flesh, drink no wine, and lives a life of great chastity, having intercourse with no women except their wives; nor would they on any account take what belongs to another: so their law commands. And they are all distinguished by wearing a thread of cotton over one shoulder and tied under the other arm, so that it crosses the breast'²⁷

²⁷ Yule and Cordier, *Travels of Marco Polo*, pp. 363-65. [The merchants appear to have worn the sacred thread as they claimed the status of the Vaiśya. Or, does 'Abraiman' stand for 'Brāhmaṇa'?—Ed.]

X

KĀNYAKUBJA, A CENTRE OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, North Bengal University,
Raja Rammohannagar

The famous city of Kānyakubja,¹ which is the modern township of Kanauj in the Farrukhabad District of U.P., was situated on the western bank of the Ganges.² The city rose into eminence under the Maukharis (6th century A.D.); but during the reigns of Harṣavardhana (7th century A.D.) and Yaśovarman (8th century A.D.), it acquired a special political status. After Yaśovarman, the city became the cynosure of all the important powers of India like the Gurjjara-Pratihāras, the Pālas and the Rāṣtrakūṭas. These powers had been struggling among themselves for establishing their respective supremacy over Kānyakubja,* whose glory, however, never dwindled

1 According to a *Rāmāyaṇa* legend, Kuśinābha, founder of the city, had one hundred daughters, all but the youngest of whom scorned the hermit, Vāyu. In revenge the sage cursed them, and their back became humped, and henceforth the city was called 'Kanyākubja' or 'the crooked maiden'. See *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XIV, 1908, pp. 370-72. The city was also called Mahodaya, Kānyakubja, Gādhipura, Kauśa and Kuśasthala (*Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*, Bhūmi-kāṇḍa, vv. 39-40). The Gurjjara-Pratihāra records, the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* (GOS ed., 1934, p. 94), and the *Padma Purāṇa* (Sṛṣṭi-khaṇḍa, Ch. 35 and Uttara-khaṇḍa, Ch. 53) refer to the city of Mahodaya. See N. L. Dey, *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India*, London, 1927, p. 87. Abu Zaid (900 A.D.), on the authority of Ibn Wahab, calls Kaduja (i.e. Kanyākubja) a great city. In 1016 A. D. when Mahmūd of Ghaznī approached Kanyākubja, he 'saw a city which raised its head to the skies, and which, in strength and structure, might justly boast to have no equal'. See *Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India*, ed. S. N. Majumdar Sastri, Calcutta, 1924, pp. 430ff. [Read 'Kuśanābha'.—Ed.]

2 The eastern face of the city was washed by the Ganges, and this we know from Fa-hien's accounts (S. N. Majumdar Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 432). At present the Ganges is several miles away from the town of Kanauj.

*[This view is dubious. The struggle between the Pratihāras and Rāṣtrakūṭas began when Yaśovarman was on the throne of Kanauj.—Ed.]

before the decline of the Gāhaḍavalas in the 12th century A.D.

The question naturally arises as to what was alluring the powerful rulers of India in the different periods to capture and occupy this city. Was it purely for the fame with which the city was associated? Did it stand merely for the symbol of sovereignty over the whole of India, or Northern India in particular? We have not given sufficient attention to these questions as yet. In our opinion, behind every conquest of territory, there must be certain motives. It is true that the growth of a political power was primarily the result of its ambition for territorial expansion. But at the same time the existence of economic factors behind political activities cannot be overlooked. In other words, the prospect of economic gain appears to be a most important motivating factor, 'as the love for gain is an inborn instinct of man'. We can take a few positive cases from the history of ancient India with a view to elucidating this point further.*

In the expansion of the Kuṣāṇa power in India, the importance of economic factors cannot be underestimated. The statement of the *Hou Han-Shu* that the Yüe-chi (i.e. the Kuṣāṇas) became rich as a result of their conquest of T'ien-chu or Shen-tu, should imply that economic factors played a vital role in urging them to invade that territory.³ Again, in the history of the Guptas, the Śaka king Rudrasimha III or one of his successors was overthrown by Samudragupta's son and successor Candragupta II (c. 376-413 A.D.) who annexed

*[This view does not appear to be reconcilable with the ancient Indian conception of *digvijaya* and *mitr-āmitra-cakra*. Moreover, a place must have often been conquered not for its economic but strategic importance and other reasons including enmity and revenge.—Ed.]

3 Cf. Fan Yeh, *Hou Han-Shu* (Ssu-pu-pie-yao ed., Ch. 118, p. 9. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (sec. 39) refers to brisk commercial activities in Scythia. The *Hou Han-Shu* also indicates the existence of regular commercial relations between this region and Ta-C'in (*loc. cit.*), i.e. the original possessions of the Roman empire (*Toung pao*, 1915, S. 11, Vol. XVI, p. 690). See B. N. Mukherjee, *The Economic Factors in Kuṣāṇa History*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 11ff.

the Western Malwa region to the Gupta empire. From the various inscriptions and numismatic evidence,⁴ we can understand Candragupta II's concern for this rich and prosperous territory, which was the centre of a number of most important and busy ports of India. The result of this conquest can well be seen in the wealth and grandeur of the period of Kumāragupta I (c. 413-55 A.D.), son and successor of Candragupta II. Hence, it has aptly been remarked that 'the impetus received by the western overseas trade and influx of foreign gold into the country manifested itself in a great revival of art'. "It was in this reign that Gupta architecture and sculpture received its final form."⁵

The conquest of Kānyakubja gave several advantages to its occupier. As stated by Cunningham 'the situation [of Kanauj] is a commanding one, and before the use of the cannon, height alone must have made Kanoj a strong and important position'.⁶ Its occupier might have also intervened with great success in Indian politics, North Indian politics in particular. Besides this, other advantages, which the city held out to its conqueror, were possibly much more alluring to the eyes of the invaders. These were undoubtedly the commercial facilities. Because of its unique position the city was not only a centre of commercial activities, but served as a link between India and other countries of Western, Central and Eastern Asia.*

Kānyakubja as an important city is known from the early indigenous and foreign literature. The epics and Purāṇas

4 The invasion against the Śaka kingdom began before 401 A. D. as indicated in the Udayagiri cave inscription (D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilisation*, Vol. I, 1965, pp. 279ff.) The rare silver coins of Candragupta II are more directly imitated from the Śaka coins of the western fabric (see Allan's *Catalogue of the Gupta Coins*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix).

5 R. D. Banerji, *The Age of the Imperial Guptas*, Varanasi, 1935, Chapter on 'Art'.

6 Majumdar Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

*[It is difficult to prove it with reference to the different ages of history. —Ed.]

before the decline of the Gāhaḍavalas in the 12th century A.D.

The question naturally arises as to what was alluring the powerful rulers of India in the different periods to capture and occupy this city. Was it purely for the fame with which the city was associated? Did it stand merely for the symbol of sovereignty over the whole of India, or Northern India in particular? We have not given sufficient attention to these questions as yet. In our opinion, behind every conquest of territory, there must be certain motives. It is true that the growth of a political power was primarily the result of its ambition for territorial expansion. But at the same time the existence of economic factors behind political activities cannot be overlooked. In other words, the prospect of economic gain appears to be a most important motivating factor, 'as the love for gain is an inborn instinct of man'. We can take a few positive cases from the history of ancient India with a view to elucidating this point further.*

In the expansion of the Kuṣāṇa power in India, the importance of economic factors cannot be underestimated. The statement of the *Hou Han-Shu* that the Yüe-chi (i.e. the Kuṣāṇas) became rich as a result of their conquest of T'ien-chu or Shen-tu, should imply that economic factors played a vital role in urging them to invade that territory.³ Again, in the history of the Guptas, the Śaka king Rudrasimha III or one of his successors was overthrown by Samudragupta's son and successor Candragupta II (c. 376-413 A.D.) who annexed

*[This view does not appear to be reconcilable with the ancient Indian conception of *digvijaya* and *mitr-āmitra-cakra*. Moreover, a place must have often been conquered not for its economic but strategic importance and other reasons including enmity and revenge.—Ed.]

3 Cf. Fan Yeh, *Hou Han-Shu* (Ssu-pu-pie-yao ed., Ch. 118, p. 9. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (sec. 39) refers to brisk commercial activities in Scythia. The *Hou Han-Shu* also indicates the existence of regular commercial relations between this region and Ta-C'in (*loc. cit.*), i.e. the original possessions of the Roman empire (*Toung pao*, 1915, S. 11, Vol. XVI, p. 690). See B. N. Mukherjee, *The Economic Factors in Kuṣāṇa History*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 11ff.

the Western Malwa region to the Gupta empire. From the various inscriptions and numismatic evidence,⁴ we can understand Candragupta II's concern for this rich and prosperous territory, which was the centre of a number of most important and busy ports of India. The result of this conquest can well be seen in the wealth and grandeur of the period of Kumāragupta I (c. 413-55 A.D.), son and successor of Candragupta II. Hence, it has aptly been remarked that 'the impetus received by the western overseas trade and influx of foreign gold into the country manifested itself in a great revival of art'. "It was in this reign that Gupta architecture and sculpture received its final form."⁵

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refer to it.⁷ Ptolemy (2nd century A.D.) locates the city of Kanogiza, which is identified with Kānyakubja, in Trans-Gangetic India.⁸ In another place, the same geographer, while speaking of the seven towns of Prasiake (*Prācyā*), mentions Kanagora, which is also identified with Kānyakubja by Smith,⁹ and Sircar¹⁰ considers it wrongly placed by Ptolemy. During his travels in Northern India, Fa-hien (4th century A.D.)¹¹ visited this place, the name of which is transliterated by him as Ka-nao-ye, while Hiuen-tsang, a few centuries later, mentions it as Kan-na-ku-pa-se (i.e. Kānyakubja).¹² Both the Chinese pilgrims place Kānyakubja on the bank of the Ganges. The Ganges remains navigable throughout the year and hence, naturally the occupier of Kanauj could have controlled the Gangetic trade traffic effectively.

The occupation of this city by the Maukharis (6th century A.D.) and later by the Puṣyabhūti (7th century A.D.) made them rich and prosperous nations and enabled them to intervene in North Indian politics successfully. In the 8th century A.D. Yaśovarman of Kānyakubja played a short-lived, but important role in the political arena of Northern India. Next, Kānyakubja came under Pāla influence during the reign of Dharmapāla (c. 770-810 A.D.).¹³ But soon afterwards the Gurjara-Pratihāras established their hegemony over the Gangetic Doab and made Mahodaya (Kanauj) their capital and, henceforth, they remained practically unchallenged in Northern India for several centuries. The Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the

7 See S. Soerensen, *An Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata*, Delhi, 1963, p. 381; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XIV, Oxford, 1908, pp. 370ff.; Majumdar Sastri, *op. cit.*, pp. 431, 707.

8 R. C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, pp. 251ff.

9 *JRAS*, 1908, p. 700.

10 *Indian Studies Past and Present*, July-September, 1966, p. 371.

11 P. C. Bagchi, *India and China*, 1944, pp. 68ff.

12 S. Beal, *Travels of Hiuen-Tsang*, Vol. II, p. 233. [See p. 89 below. —Ed.]

13 Cf. the Khalimpur copper-plate inscription of Dharmapāla (year 32), *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, No. 34. [After Yaśovarman, Kanauj passed to the Āyudha kings.—Ed.]

Deccan, who were the contemporaries of the Pālas and the Pratihāras, however, did not entertain the idea that Kānyakubja and its adjoining regions should be controlled either by the Pālas or by the Pratihāras. For they knew it well that the occupation of Kānyakubja by either of the parties would enable the occupier to control the entire trade traffic passing through the North Indian trade routes. So we find that, whenever this region was occupied either by the Pālas or the Pratihāras,* the Rāṣṭrakūṭas advanced to the north and tried to keep this region free from foreign domination in order to maintain their trade flowing.¹⁴

We may now attempt to trace a few important routes that passed through Kānyakubja. The Buddhist *Vinaya Piṭaka*¹⁵ mentions one route that stretched from Rājagṛha, the ancient capital of Magadha, to Takṣaśilā in the west, connecting such cities as Prayāga, Kānyakubja and Mathurā. The *Yuga Purāṇa* section of the *Gārgīsamhitā* states that the Yavanas occupied Sāketa (Ayodhyā in U.P.) after traversing the Pañcāla country and Mathurā on the way and penetrated as far east as Kusu-madhva (i.e. Pāṭaliputra, modern Patna). There were perhaps several Yavana invasions, one of which mentioned in the *Stūpāvadāna* of the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*, took place during the reign of king Milinda (Menander) resulting in the transference of the Śuṅga capital from Pāṭaligrāma (i.e. Pāṭaliputra) to Vidiśā (modern Besnagar in M.P.).^{15a} Patañjali also refers to the Yavana invasions of Sāketa (i.e. Ayodhyā) and Madhyamikā (i.e. Chitor in Rajasthan).* It is likely that the Yavanas proceeding from Bactria and afterwards from the North-Western Frontier region passed through Mathurā and Kānyakubja en route to Sāketa. Both Mathurā and Kānya-

*[The Pratihāras were in occupation of Kanauj from c. 830 to 1019 A.D.—Ed.]

14 Cf. 'Pāla-Pratihāra-Rāṣṭrakūṭa Tripartite Struggle (A. D. 750-70)' by A. K. Lahiri in *Vishveshvarānand Indological Journal*, 1968. [The statement does not appear to be quite correct.—Ed.]

15 *Vinaya Piṭaka* (ed. H. Oldenberg, 1879-1883), Vol. III, p. 2.

15a D. C. Sircar in *JRAS*, 1963, pp. 20ff.

*[Madhyamikā is modern Nagari about 8 miles from Chitorgarh.—Ed.]

kubja are situated almost in the same latitude as that of Sāketa and are also mentioned in the *Mahābhāṣya*.¹⁶ This route seems to have been stretched as far as Pāṭaliputra in Magadha.

Przyluski observes that, after the establishment of the Greek kingdom of Bactria, commercial intercourse became very active between the valleys of the Ganges and the Oxus. From Pāṭaliputra, three great roads (drawn on the models of the Achaemenids) 'radiate to the frontiers of the empire—the south-western to Barygaza by Kauśāmbī and Ujjayinī, the northern to Nepāl by Vaiśālī and Śrāvastī and the north-western, the longest, to Bactriana by Mathurā and the Upper Valley of the Indus'.¹⁷ It is unlikely that the route stretching from Pāṭaliputra to Mathurā bypassed Kānyakubja, the importance of which as a commercial centre has been acknowledged even in the account of Ptolemy and probably also of Pliny.¹⁸ The route thus proceeding from Mathurā extended as far as Bactria in the west, where presumably it was joined by two other trade routes, one of which passed northwards and proceeded through ancient Sogdiana, the passes of T'ien-Shah and Kch-Turfan [sic—Ed.], and the other, which was more frequented by the Chinese missionaries, traversed the country of the Tokharians, passes of the Pamir, the country of Kashgar and then reached China.¹⁹ There was another important trade route which emerging from Mesopotamia, through Persia joined Bactria.²⁰

The Chinese pilgrims like Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang came to India in the different periods of history by following, more or less, either of the routes mentioned above and visited Kānya-

16 On Pāṇini 5. 3. 57.

17 The passage has been quoted by S. Chattopadhyaya, *The Śakas in India*, 1st ed., p. 81.

18 The Jain chronicles describe Kānyakubja as Kalyāṇa or Kalyāṇa-kaṭaka, which form seems to have been the original of Pliny's Kalinipaxe in his 'Natural History' (1st century A. D.). Pliny also refers to Methora, i.e. Mathurā (R. C. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 342ff.).

19 P. C. Bagchi, *op. cit.* pp. 5, 11, 13-18.

20 H. G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World*, p. 1.

kubja on their way.²¹ While Fa-hien came to the city from Mathurā, Hiuen-tsang, it appears, came to Sāṅkāśya (Farrukhabad District)* and, travelling 40 miles south-eastward from there, reached Ka-no-kue-she (Kānyakubja). From there the pilgrim proceeded further south-eastwards reaching A-yu-t'e (Ayodhyā), then to A-ye-mu-k'a (Aśvamukha to the east of Ayodhyā), Po-lo-ya-ka (Prayāga) and then Kiao-shang-lo-fu-shi-ti** (Kauśāmbī). From Pāṭaliputra the pilgrim is said to have followed Harṣavardhana to Kānyakubja through Prayāga and Kauśāmbī.²²

From the career of the famous poet Bilhaṇa, it appears that the poet went to Mathurā from Kashmir and then passing through Kānyakubja and Prayāga reached Vārāṇasī; staying at the court of Kalacuri Karṇa for some time, he went to Dhārā, Aṇahilavāḍa and other places. Ultimately he enjoyed the patronage of the Western Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI of Kalyāṇa.²³

Kālapriya mentioned in the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*²⁴ has been identified with modern Kālpī (in the Jalaon Dist., U. P.) which was an important station between the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab and the South not only during the Muslim period, but also in the early medieval age.²⁵ Kālpī is about 75 miles directly to the south of Kanauj. In the first quarter of the tenth century A.D., when Indra III (915-28 A.D.), the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king of the Daccan, was marching against Mahodaya (i.e. Kanauj), the capital of the Pratihāras, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa army was for a

*[Sāṅkāśya is modern Sankisa in the Etah District.—Ed.]

**[It is really 'Kiao-shang-mi'.—Ed.]

21 P. C. Bagchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 68ff., 74ff.

22 For the Indian territories in Hiuen-tsang's *Si-yu-ki*, see T. Watters *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, London, 1904; Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, London, 1871, pp. ix-xii.

23 See L. Gopal, *The Economic Life of Northern India*, 1965, p. 92.

24 GOC ed. 1934, p. 94.

25 D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, 1960, p. 243.

time encamped at Kālapriya (i.e. Kālpī) where it crossed the Yamunā.²⁶

Al-Bīrūnī²⁷ who visited* India in 1030-31 A.D., takes the country round Kanoj (i.e. Kānyakubja or Kanauj) as the middle of India and describes the various routes that emerged from Kanoj in the different directions, specifying the distances of one place from the other that lay on the routes.

(a) On the route from Kanoj to the south between the Yamunā and the Ganges, the places mentioned are Jajjamau (12 farsakh²⁸ from Kanoj), Abhāpurī (8 farsakh); Kuraha (8 farsakh), Barhamshil or Brahmaśilā (8 farsakh) and the Tree (*Akṣaya-Vaṭa*) of Prayāga (12 farsakh).

(b) On the route from Kanoj to the east the places are Bārī (10 farsakh), Dūgum (45 farsakh), the empire of Shilahat²⁹ (10 farsakh), Bihat or Bettia (12 farsakh), and then Tilwat (Tirabhukti or Tirhut), and finally the mountains of Kāmṛū (Kāmarūpa).

(c) On the route from Kanoj to the south-east lay the realm of Jajāhūti (Jejākabhukti) (30 farsakh from Kanoj). Between Kajūrāho (i.e. Kharjūravāhaka) and Kanoj there were two fortresses, viz., Gwaliyar (Gwalior) and Kālanjar (Kālāñjara).

(d) On the route from Kanoj towards the south-west, the places mentioned are Āsī (18 farsakh from Kanoj), Sahanyā (17 farsakh), Jandrā (18 farsakh), Rājaurī or Rajorgadh in Alwar (15 farsakh), and Bazāna or Bayana in Bharatpur (20 farsakh).

26 See the Cambay plates of Govinda IV. Cf. Altekar, *The Rāṣtrakūṭas and their Times*, p. 102; Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

27 See E. C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I, pp. 198ff.

*[Sic—Ed]

28 Sachau has shown that 1 farsakh or kuroh (*kroṣa*)=4 Arabian miles (2,186 yards each)=about $3\frac{3}{4}$ English geographical miles (2025 yards each); cf. *ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 316.

29 He is probably Sauryāditya of the Malayaketu family of Daradgaṇḍakī (in the Gandhak Valley), who issued charters in 1020 and 1026 A.D., according to Sircar (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 130ff.).

The distance between Māhūra (Mathurā) and Kanoj was the same as that between Kanoj and Bazāna, viz., 28 farsakh. Tāneshar (Sthāṇviśvara or Thaneswar in the Ambala District) lies between the two rivers, to the north both of Kanoj and Māhūra, at a distance of nearly 80 farsakh from Māhūra. From Māhūra another route stretches to Ujain (Ujjayini) passing through places like Dūdahi (in the Jhansi District), Bāmahur, and Bhāilasān (Bhāyillasvāmin).³⁰

30 Sircar, *Cosm. Geog.*, p. 156.

XI

TRADERS' PRIVILEGES GUARANTEED BY KINGS

D. C. Sircar, Calcutta University

There is an interesting tale in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita* (Chapter II) in which a valuable article in the possession of a prostitute is found to be stolen property, and she is pressed by the king to divulge the source from which she had received it. The woman protested and pointed out that giving out the names of lovers is against the custom of her class and that a prostitute does not expect persons to spend at her place money earned only by righteous means.¹ But the king threatened her that the nose and ears of both herself and her mother would be cut off if she persisted in withholding the name of the person who had given her the article. Then under Dhanamitra's instructions, the prostitute gave out the name of the innocent merchant Arthapati as her lover who had given her the said article as a present. The enraged king then ordered the death of the culprit ; but Dhanamitra said, *ārya, Maurya-datta eṣa varo vaṇijām=idrśeṣv=aparādheṣu n=āsti asubhir=abhiyogaḥ ; yadi kupito='si, hr̥ta-sarvasvo nirvāsanīyaḥ pāpa eṣa iti*, "Sire, there is a privilege granted to the merchants by the Mauryas that they should not be punished with death in this kind of crime ; in case you are angry, you may banish this wretch from the country after confiscating his entire property."²

The above tale has several interesting aspects. In the first place, it shows that there were certain crimes for which the punishment of the traders was milder than that of ordinary criminals, and that one of these was the possession of stolen property, which was generally regarded as theft. For this crime, the punishment

1 See *op. cit.*, ed. Jivananda, pp. 134—*rājñ=ānuyukte ca n=aīṣa nyāyo veṣa-kulasya yad=dātur=apadeśaḥ ; na hi arthair=nyāy-ārjitair=eva puruṣā veśam=upatiṣṭhanti*, etc.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

of an ordinary criminal was apparently death ; but a trader committing the same offence enjoyed a privilege granted by the Mauryas and was subject to the maximum punishment of banishment from the area or the kingdom and confiscation of his property by the king. The reason underlying this concession is no doubt the fact that often a merchant might have to accept a stolen article from one either in mortgage or for sale because the person would solemnly declare the object to be his own, and it was not possible for the trader to conduct any business if all such objects were suspected to be stolen property. It is a matter of regret that, although the passage *idrśeṣv=aparādheṣu* suggests that a number of privileges were granted to the traders by the Mauryas, we are told of only one of them.

Before mentioning the other interesting aspects of the tale, a word may be said here about the expression *Maurya-datta* in the above tale. We have taken it to mean 'awarded by the Mauryas (*i.e.* the kings of the Maurya dynasty)',³ though it is sometimes interpreted as 'awarded by the Maurya (*i.e.* 'the son of Murā') meaning Candragupta founder of the Maurya empire.'⁴ It is, however, significant that, while the early authorities use *Maurya* as the name of a family or clan,⁵ it has been pointed out that only the late commentator of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* explains it as 'the son of Murā' and says that Candragupta was the Nanda king's son from a woman named Murā, even though the correct form, in that case,

3 Cf. Kane, *Hist. Dharm.*, Vol. III, p. 390.

4 Cf. Jivananda, *op. cit.*, p. 135, note 35.

5 On Pāṇini, V. 3.99 (*jīvik-ārthe c=āpaṇye*), Patañjali says, *Mauryair=hirāṇy-ārthibhir=arcāḥ prakalpītāḥ ; bhavet=tāsu na syāt ; yās=tv=etāḥ samprati-pūj-ārthās=tāsu bhaviṣyati*. It says that the Mauryas, who were greedy of gold or wealth, manufactured the images of Śiva, Skanda, Viśākha, etc., for sale, and such images would be called Śivaka, etc., but that images to be set up for immediate worship would not be so called. The Junagarh inscription of 150 A.D. (*Sel. Ins.*, Vol. I, 1965, p. 177) mentions both Candragupta and his grandson Aśoka specifically as *Maurya* (*i.e.* belonging to the Maurya clan). The Historical section of the *Purāṇas* use the word in the plural to indicate a dynasty or clan (Pargiter, *Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age*, pp. 26ff.).

should have been *Maureya* and not *Maurya* which would mean 'the son of Mura (male).'⁶ Really, *Maurya* is the Sanskrit from of Pali *Moriya* which is the name of a tribe inhabiting Pippalivana in the sub-Himalayan region in the Buddha's age, though the meaning of the name cannot be satisfactorily determined.⁷

6 See R. K. Mookerji in *The Age of Imperial Unity*, ed. Majumdar, p. 55. The commentator of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says, *Candraguptam Nandasy = aiva patny-antarasya Murā-saṁjñasya putram Mauryāṇām prathamam* (Wilson, *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, tran., p. 375, note). Likewise Dhunḍhirāja, a late commentator of the *Mudrārākṣasa*, says that Candragupta was the son of Maurya from his Śūdra wife Murā (Mookerji, *loc. cit.*), though the accounts of the two commentators do not tally. According to the earlier authority of the drama *Mudrārākṣasa* (c. sixth century A.D.), Candragupta was a Maurya-putra (II.6) and was brought up by the Nanda king and was probably his son (II.8). *Maurya-putra* does not mean 'the son of Maurya' as usually believed, but 'a scion of the Maurya clan' as in cases like *Śibi-putra*, *Bhoja-putra*, *Videha-putra*, *Guhila-putra*, etc. The same drama also suggests (III.3) that the Nanda king was Candragupta's *guru* (father), and (V. 19) that Candragupta was the *svāmi-putra* (master's son) of the Nanda king's minister. Elsewhere in the work (Act IV), Candragupta is called *Nand-ānvaya* (descended from Nanda), and Nanda's minister is stated to have been Candragupta's *pitṛ-paryāy-āgata* (connected by ancestral succession). It is also said that the Nanda family was Candragupta's *pitṛ-kula-bhūta* (Act IV), i.e. as good as his paternal family. The *Mudrārākṣasa* (II. 7 ; VI. 6) also represents Candragupta as *kula-hīna* and a *Vṛṣala* (Śūdra or outcaste) while Nanda is stated to have belonged to a highly respectable family. These facts appear to suggest that Candragupta was an illegitimate or adopted son of Nanda. But more reliable than these is the earlier *Mahāvamśa* (close of the fifth century A.D.) tradition representing Candragupta as a scion of the Moriya clan. The Moriyas were apparently sub-Himalayan Mongoloids claiming the status of the Kṣatriya like the Licchavis and others, though they must have been regarded as outcastes by the orthodox leaders of society. It is difficult to say whether Candragupta was called Moriya because his mother belonged to that clan. See *Journ. Anc. Ind. Hist.*, Vol. V, pp. 242ff.

7 See Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, s.v. *Moriya*. The commentary on the *Mahāvamśa* offers two fanciful explanations: (1) *Moriya* is a mistake for *Modiya* meaning 'rejoicing [in the prosperity of their city]', and (2) it is derived from the word *mora* (Sanskrit *mayūra*, 'a peacock'). These unsound interpretations make it clear that the derivation of the name was unintelligible to the medieval writers. *Maurya* is associated with *mayūra* in the *Parīṣiṣṭaparvan* or *Sthavirāvalīcaritra* (VIII. 229-31) by Hemacandra (1089-1172 A.D.), Candragupta being mentioned in it as a scion of a family of *Mayūrapoṣakas* (peacock-tamers) from his mother's side.

The second interesting fact in the *Daśakumāracarita* tale is that, whereas Daṇḍin, the author of the work, seems to have flourished in South India⁸ about the seventh century A.D.,⁹ the Mauryas ruled from their capital at Pāṭaliputra (near modern Patna in Bihar) in c.324-187 B.C. Thus the privileges appear to have been continuously enjoyed by the merchants for about nine centuries even far away from the Maurya capital. It is of course well known that the Maurya empire extended over considerable parts of South India probably as far south as the district round Kanchipuram near Madras.¹⁰ What is surprising is that even the southernmost areas of the vast empire of the Mauryas were under so much of their effective control that the concession granted by them to the traders remained in force at least for more than eight centuries after the fall of the Maurya dynasty about 187 B.C. This may be due to the fact that the mercantile community, at least in South India, was strong enough to be able to exact the concession from the State continuously throughout the centuries. These Mauryas were probably not of any minor family.

The third point of interest in the tale is that it recognises *rāja-śāsana* among the sources of law. In the early Indian legal literature, emphasis is usually laid on the *śāstra* in this connection. However, Kātyāyana, as quoted by Davaṇṇa-bhaṭṭa, says—

deśasy=ānumāten=aiva vyavasthā yā nirūpitā|
likhitā tu sadā dhāryā mudritā rāja-mudrayā||
śāstra-vad=yatnato rakṣyā tām nirīkṣya vinirṇayet||¹¹

This refers to a partial recognition of *rāja-śāsana* in law, because the king is represented as entitled to recognise the customs of a particular locality. However, there is epigraphic evidence indicating the kings' importance as a maker of law

8 Cf. Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Anc. Med. Ind.*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1967, p. 202.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

10 See Sircar, *Maski Inscription of Aśoka*, Hyderabad, 1958, p. 8.

11 *Smṛticandrikā*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 58.

particularly in relation to the grant of concessions and privileges.

Thus one of the innovations introduced by Aśoka in the Maurya administration is that a respite of three days was granted to condemned men lying in prison under sentence of death.^{11a} This, however, applied to all communities including the merchants. Likewise the Anjaneri (Nasik District, Maharashtra) plates (709-10 A.D.),¹² of Bhogaśakti and Tejovarman accord certain concessions granted in favour of the merchants of Samagiri, the first of which says that they would not have to pay any tax within Bhogaśakti's kingdom so long as the sun and moon endure. The traders of a particular town were therefore made permanently free from taxes. Besides that, a number of other privileges were also granted to the said merchants and these included freedom from *aputra-dhana* (confiscation of the wealth of a merchant dying without leaving an heir),^{12a} *umbara-bheda* (entry of policemen into a merchant's house during his absence) as well as *āvāsaka* and *jemaka* (obligation for giving accommodation and food to royal officials visiting the town). In the same context, mention is also made of fines for certain offences, though it is not clearly stated whether they were concessional rates to be charged from the offenders if they belonged to the mercantile community or the merchants were allowed to realise fines for the particular crimes at Samagiri i.e. in their own estate, at the prescribed rates. These include a fine of 108 *rūpakas* (silver coins) for the abduction of an unmarried girl (*kumārī-sāhasa*); 32 *rūpakas* for adultery (*saṁgrahaṇa*); 16 *rūpakas* for the mutilation of ears; 4

11a See Sircar, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 1967, p. 63.

12 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, p. 237—*Samagiri-vāstavya-vaṇijām candr-ārka-kālikam śulkaṁ=ādeyam samasta-rājye n=āsti; aparam ca aputra-dhanan=n=āsti; umbara-bhedah rājapuruṣāṇām=āvāsako jemakaś=ca n=āsti; kumārīsāhase rūpyakāṇām=aṣṭ-ottara-śatam; saṁgrahaṇe dvātriṁśad-rūpakāḥ; karna-troḍanikāyām ṣoḍaśa-rūpakāḥ; śira-spoṣane catvāri rūpakāḥ; bhārikāyām vaṇik-putrasy=aṣṭ-ottara-śatam rūpakāṇām; naṅge grhītasya yac=c=aṣṭau ṣoḍaśa vā nagara-mahallakā vicārya vadanti tad=eva pramāṇam.*

12a This concession lapsed at some places (cf. *Śākuntala*, Act VI; ed. S. Ray, p. 628).

rūpakas for bruising one's head ; and 108 *rūpakas* for a merchant's son having illicit connection with a female porter for a long time, though it was 8 or 16 *rūpakas* (as might have been fixed by the Elders of the City Council of merchants) for each such act of adultery. The reference to the fixation of the fines by the City Elders probably suggests that the merchants were empowered to realise the prescribed fines. This seems also to be supported by the charter of Viṣṇuṣeṇa (Viṣṇubhaṭa to be discussed below.

Another inscription¹³ (1059 A.D.) from Sudi in the Dharwar District of Mysore, belonging to the reign of Cālukya Someśvara I Āhavamalla (1043-68 A.D.), registers the *śāsana-maryādā* granted to eight Śreṣṭhins and eighty households apparently of the merchant community living in the village. The privileges included freedom of the shops and households from payment of all taxes for two years. An interesting concession is that the guilt of the father would not affect the son, nor the guilt of the son affect the father. It is also said that, if a shop-keeper would strike a thief, robber, burglar, enemy or an evil-minded person in the veranda near the screen of the shop, there should be neither guilt nor fine, but that, if he would strike them elsewhere, he would be fined six gold Gadyāṇas. The record specifically states that the rules regarding the eight Śreṣṭhins should not apply to the country nor those of the country to the said Śreṣṭhins.

There in an earlier copper-plate inscription,¹⁴ dated Vikrama 649 (592 A.D.), which says how king Viṣṇuṣeṇa (also called Viṣṇubhaṭa), apparently of the Gujarat region, was approached by the merchant community of a locality called Lohāṭā with the request of being favoured with the ruler's *ācāra-sthiti-pātra* which they could utilise in protecting and helping the members of their community (*loka-saṁgrah-ānugrah-ārtham*) and how the merchants were favoured with the king's *sthiti-pātra* which was used in the protection and settle-

13 *Ibid.*, Vol. XV, pp. 77ff.

14 *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163ff.

ment of the people of his kingdom (*janapadasya...parirakṣaṇa-sanniveśanāya*). This *sthiti-pātra* or *ācāra-sthiti-pātra*, in which the word *pātra* has the same meaning as *patra* or document, is elsewhere also called *anugraha-sthiti-pātra*, *sthiti-vyavasthā* and *sthiti-pātra-vyavasthā*, and is actually a long list of regulations which look like prevalent customary laws without much modification and remind us of the opinion of Kātyāyana quoted above. At the end of the record, Viṣṇuṣeṇa further says that, in addition to the *ācāras* quoted in the document, he also approved of other *ācāras* that were handed down from ancient times (*pūrva-valamānak-ācārāḥ*). He concludes with the request that his *anugraha-sthiti-pātra* should be approved and observed by the future rulers of the land. The above document of Viṣṇuṣeṇa is followed by an endorsement according to which *Sāmanta* Avanti of Darpapura issued an order, in Kalacuri 357 (605 A.D.), to his own officials informing them that he had given his assent to the *sthiti-vyavasthā* granted by king Viṣṇubhaṭa (Viṣṇuṣeṇa) to the community of merchants residing at Lohāṭaka-grāma (Lohāṭā) and that persons conducting their respective trades and following the above *sthiti-pātra-vyavasthā* should not be disturbed in any way.

We have tried elsewhere¹⁵ to explain all the seventytwo regulations in the charter of Viṣṇuṣeṇa, and it is probably not necessary to repeat the discussion on all of them here. It has, however, to be noticed that, the *sthiti-pātra* or *sthiti-vyavasthā*, obtained by the merchants of Lohāṭā or Lohāṭaka from king Viṣṇuṣeṇa contained certain rules followed in the administration of the kingdom and that the merchants obtained a copy of them for their own guidance especially because some of the rules related to the mercantile community. It is, however, possible that some rules relating to the community indicated some concession to the trader.

Thus one of the rules is *varṣa-paryuṣitā vaṇijāḥ prāveśyaṁ śulka-ātiyātrikaṁ na dāpanīyaḥ* ; *nairgamikaṁ de yam*. It says

15 *Loc. cit.*

that merchants staying in the kingdom for the rainy season (or staying abroad for a year) should pay only the exit tax but not the entry fee. This may have been a concession. Another rule of the king is *para-viṣayāt kāraṇ-ābhyāgato vaṇijakaḥ para-reṣe na grāhyaḥ*, meaning that a merchant belonging to another district or kingdom and coming to another country or kingdom on business should not be apprehended for *para-reṣa* (probably, some offence alleged to have been committed by him elsewhere). This also looks like a concession. Another rule is *bhāṇḍa-bhṛta-vahitrasya śulka-ātiyātrike rūpakāḥ dvādaśa rū° 12 : chārmike rūpakāḥ sa-pādaḥ 1½*. It says that when a *vahitra* (probably, a large carrier) full of *bhāṇḍas* (merchandise, manufactured articles) was going to cross the boundary of the kingdom, the crossing fee would be 12 silver coins and the cess to be realised in the name of religious functions would be 1½ of such coins. It is here difficult to be definite that the taxes mentioned do not indicate any concession in favour of the merchants. There are a good number of similar rules either relating to the merchants or to people including the traders, in the charter of Viṣṇuṣeṇa.

However, there are some rules which cannot be easily associated with merchants. One such is *prapāpūraka-gopālāḥ rājagraheṇa na grāhyāḥ*, i.e. persons engaged in filling the cisterns at watering stations as well as milkmen should not be apprehended or recruited for free labour on the king's behalf. This has no apparent relation to the merchants because the word *gopāla* seems to refer to the community of milkmen who are regarded as different from the mercantile community at least in most parts of our country. Likewise, rules like the following also do not appear to be particularly related to the mercantile community— (1) *Lohakāra-rathakāra-nāpita-kumbhakāra-prabhṛtīnām vārikeṇa viṣṭiḥ karaṇīyā*, i.e. the blacksmiths, carpenters, barbers, potters and others should be recruited for forced labour under the supervision of officers ; (2) *gavām tauṇḍike viṃśopakāḥ pañca, mahiṣyās=tad-dviguṇam*, i.e. the fine for one's cow grazing in another's corn-

field was five *viṃśopakas* ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the silver coin called *rūpaka*) while for one's she-buffalo the fine was ten *viṃśopakas*; etc. Some of the rules appear to be general rather than applicable to the traders alone: e.g. (1) *puruṣ-āparādhe strī na grāhyā*, i.e. the wife should not be apprehended for the husband's guilt; (2) *śaṅkayā grahaṇam n=āsti*, i.e. people should not be arrested on mere suspicion of a crime; etc. These may have been meant for guiding the merchants in the administration of their own estates under the king's permission.

The above records of Viṣṇuśeṇa and Avanti and the later documents of Bhogaśakti and Tejovarma and of the time of Someśvara I suggest that one of the Maurya kings of Pāṭaliputra, preferably Candragupta (c. 324-300 B.C.), issued a similar document for the benefit of the mercantile community pursuing trade in various parts of the vast Maurya empire.

There are many other records in which remission of taxes on articles of merchandise is referred to. Thus the Kharepatan (Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra) plates¹⁶ of the Śilāhāra *Mahāsāmāntādhipati Mahāmaṇḍaleśvarādhipati Paścimasamudrādhipati* Anantapāla, dated 1095 A.D. and addressed to the Hañjamana among others, records the release of certain tolls on carts coming to Sthānaka (Thana), Nāgapura (Nāgaon near Alibag), Sūrpāraka (Sopara near Bassein), Cemūli (Chaul in the Kolaba District) and other sea-ports in the Koṅkaṇa-1400. In this case, the intention was no doubt to encourage export by the sea.

16 *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. IX, p. 33: *Bomb. Gaz.*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 543.

SUPPLEMENT

XII

EARLY SINO-INDIAN MARITIME TRADE AND FU-NAN*

Adhir K. Chakravarti, Govt. Sanskrit College, Calcutta

Fu-nan is the earliest Indianized State to be mentioned by the Chinese in what is now known as Cambodia. According to the *History of the Souei*¹ and the *New History of the T'ang*,² it disappears from the arena of history as an independent kingdom when it was slowly annexed by its erstwhile vassal State of Tchen-la under its kings Bhavavarman and Tche-to-sseu-na (Citrasena Mahendravarman). The earliest known date of Bhavavarman as king of the erstwhile Fu-nan territory is 598 A. D. So Coedes thinks that the conquest of Fu-nan began in the second half of the sixth century A. D.³ Whatever it may be, the eclipse of Fu-nan took place before the rise of Śrīvijaya in the seventh century A. D. The object of this paper is essentially to study the rôle of Fu-nan in Sino-Indian maritime trade in pre-Śrīvijaya times.

The earliest Chinese mention of a supposed Indian centre of trade is contained in the *Han-Shu* (28b, 37a-38b) which was first noticed by Pelliot.⁴ The passage runs as follows : "I. From Hsü-wen and Ho-p'u, [which are] frontier ports in Jih-nan, travelling by ship for about five months, there is the kingdom of Tu-yüan. Going again by ship for about four

*[The revised copy of the article was received in July, 1972.—Ed.]

1 P. Pelliot, *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extrême-Orient*, Vol. III, p. 272.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 274. The Chinese accounts are broadly corroborated by the inscriptions of Baksei Camkron, v. 13 (Coedes, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, Vol. IV, p. 96) and Roban Romas, vv. 7-8 (Coedes, in *BEFEO* Vol. XLIII, pp. 6-7).

3 *BEFEO*, Vol. XLIII, p. 4.

4 Review of Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua, T'oung-P'ao*, Vol. XIII, pp. 457-59.

months, there is the kingdom of I-lu-mo ; going again by ship for over twenty days, there is the kingdom of Shen-li. Going by land for over ten days, there are the kingdoms of Fu-kan and Tu-lu. From the kingdoms of Fu-kan and Tu-lu going by ship for over two months, there is the kingdom of Huang-chih. The customs of the people resemble about those of Chu-yai. They have many strange products.

"II. Beginning with the emperor Wu-ti (141-87 B. C.) all offered tribute. There are chief interpreters attached to the Yellow Gate (the department of eunuchs) ; together with volunteers they sail away and go to buy brilliant pearls, glass, rare stones, strange produce ; they give gold and various kinds of silk in exchange. In the countries where they arrive, [the inhabitants] give them food and keep them company. The trading ships of the barbarians transport them one after the other, in order to make them reach [their destination]. [They] too profit from this trade and [sometimes] loot and kill people ; besides, [the travellers] must fear the tempests which may drown them. If nothing happens, they employ several years for going and returning. The big pearls have a circumference of as much as two inches.

"III. In the years between A. D. 1 and 6, Wang Ming, assisting the government, desired to manifest a majestic virtue. He sent rich presents to the king of Huang-chih commanding him to send an embassy to offer in tribute a living rhinoceros.

"IV. From the kingdom of Huang-chih going by ship for about eight months, one arrives at P'i-tsung. Going by ship for about two months, one arrives at the frontier of Hsiang-lin of Jih-nan. So it is said.

"V. To the south of Huang-chih there is the kingdom of I-ch'eng-pu. It is from there that the envoys- interpreters of Han returned."⁵

⁵ Trans. L. Petech, *East and West*, N. S., Vol. 17, Nos. 3-4, pp. 295-96. For other translations, see (i) Pelliot, *T'oung Pao*, Vol. XIII, pp. 457-59 ; (ii) G. H. Luce, *Journal of the Burmese Research Society*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 97-99 ; (iii) H. Ikeuchi, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, Vol. V, pp. 141-43 (taken from Wang Gungwu ; see below) ; (iv) J. J. Duyvendak, *China's Discovery of Africa*, pp. 9-11 ; (v) Wang Gungwu, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, pp. 30-32 ; (vi) P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersones*, pp. 8-13. Pelliot and Ikeuchi believe that the passage is based on two sets of information while Petech thinks that there were three sources : paras. I and IV, a dry itinerary ; paras. II and V a *mirabilia* tale and para. III part of the cycle of tales that grew around Wang Ming so much maligned by the Confucian historians.

For our purpose the most interesting toponym in the above itinerary is the terminus Huang-chih. As early as 1914, the great Japanese scholar Fujita Toyohachi suggested its identification with Kāñcī.⁶ The point has been forcefully advanced by G. Ferrand.⁷ Since then the identification has been accepted, among others, by Feng-Ch'eng-Chün,⁸ K. A. N. Sastri⁹ and Wang Gungwu.¹⁰ Against this identification, it has been stated that the existence of the city of Kāñcī at such an early date is doubtful, the name being mentioned in inscriptions only from the fourth century A.D. Secondly, rhinoceros sought for by Wang Ming is not mentioned in any early South Indian text.¹¹ Laufer located it in the Malaya Peninsula.¹² Hermann placed it in Ethiopia;¹³ but this view has been successfully refuted by Duyvendak.¹⁴ Van Erde¹⁵ and Lamster¹⁶ think that Huang-chih was situated in Atjeh in North Sumatra. The view was accepted by Krom and Delbrück.¹⁷ On the basis of details, given in the commentary of *Yeh Shihku*, of the tribute of rhinoceros contained in the *Han-Shu* passage, Petech states that the animal was two-horned and so clearly belonged to the *rhinoceros sumatransis* and observes further that Indian rhinoceros is always one-

6 For the Japanese reference, see Petech's article cited above (p. 297, note 13).

7 *Journal Asiatique* (1919), No. 1, pp. 541-55; No. 2, pp. 45-46.

8 Cf. Petech, *loc. cit.*, p. 298, note 15.

9 *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, pp. 380-87; *A History of South India*, p. 26.

10 *Op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.

11 Cf. O. W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, p. 268, note 15.

12 *Chinese Clay Figurines I: Prolegomena on the History of Defensive Armour*, p. 80.

13 *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*, 1913, pp. 553-64.

14 *Op. cit.*, p. 9-11.

15 *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, Vol. XLV, pp. 589-90.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 991-98.

17 Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, pp. 56-57; Delbrück, in *Bonner Jahrbücher* 1955-56, p. 56, note 175.

horned. According to him, Huang-chih has to be located somewhere about the coast of Sumatra or even of the Peninsula.¹⁸ As further argument in support of his contention, Petech says that 'transit trade with pearl and glass would point to the region of the Straits'.¹⁹ Paul Wheatley is not sure as to the location of Huang-chih. He opines that 'the most likely assumption is that Huang-chih was somewhere on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, though a site in Indo-China or Sumatra is not altogether impossible'.²⁰ Most of these identifications locating Huang-chih in extra-Indian territory are on consideration of the time taken to reach the various places mentioned in the itinerary contained in the *Han-Shu* in the general sailing condition prevailing in such an ancient period. But there has as yet been no consensus of opinion among scholars on this point. It is in this background that we propose to re-examine the problem of Huang-chih.

An item of trade mentioned in the *Han-Shu* passage under discussion is called *pi-liu-li* which is an exact Chinese transcription of Sanskrit *vaidūrya*. In view of the high antiquity of the Early Hans, it is little likely that a Sanskrit word was already adopted or assimilated in any of the languages of South East Asia. The presumption therefore is that the country from which *vaidūrya* was acquired is India, the home of Sanskrit. There is also nothing inherently wrong in identifying Huang-chih with Kāñcī, since the existence of the city is attested to by Patañjali in the second century B.C.²¹ Its antiquity may be pushed back further to the third century B.C. if credence is given to the account of Hiuen-tsang who is known to have seen an Aśokan *stūpa* at Kāñcī.²² But

18 *Op. cit.*, p. 299.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 300.

20 *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 79-85.

21 *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini, II. 4.2. [The author of the *Mahābhāṣya* may have lived in the early part of the second century B.C. ; but as we have it, the work appears to be later by a few centuries.—Ed.]

22 Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, p. 230.

there is a twofold objection to this identification. First, as noted by Wolters, no early South Indian text mentions the rhinoceros which was to be an item of tribute from the king of Huang-chih. On the other hand, to the Chinese T'ien-chu, i.e. North India, is associated with rhinoceros. Hence, Huang-chih is more likely to be situated in North India. Secondly, P. C. Bagchi has shown that the archaic pronunciation of Huang-chih would be *rwang-tsie* (g'jie) which, he thinks is a transliteration of Gaṅgā.²³ As a matter of fact, a port with a similar name, Ganges, has been mentioned by the author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. Pearls are mentioned amongst its exports.²⁴ It is therefore quite likely that Huang-chih/Gaṅgā was identical with the market-town called Ganges in the *Periplus* and situated on the mouth of the Ganges. But if there is any validity in the argument advanced by Petech that the rhinoceros sought for by the Han envoy was of the two-horned species whereas the Indian rhinoceros is always one-horned, it is to be supposed that different accounts of voyages to two different places have been jumbled up in the *Han-Shu* 'in consequence of the similarity of the Chinese toponyms'.²⁵ In other words, two places were signified by the Chinese toponym Huang-chih. The one exporting *vaidūrya* and pearls is to be identified with Gaṅgā, and the other sending two-horned rhinoceros is to be sought somewhere in Sumatra or Malay Peninsula. It will be seen that there is little justification for the suggestion that trade in pearl and glass points necessarily to the region of the Straits.

The *Han-Shu* passage may therefore be taken as evidence for the maritime trade relations existing between India and China in the centuries immediately before and after the introduction of the Christian era. Had it been possible to identify

23 *A Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II. (ed. K. A. N. Sastri), p. 773.

24 Section 63 ; trans. Schoff, p. 47.

25 The hypothesis is attributed to Gibson-Hill ; vide Wheatley, *op. cit.*, p. 19, note 47.

all the place-names mentioned in the itinerary satisfactorily, it would have been much easier to make an appreciation of the role played in this trade by the region which came to be organized politically under Fu-nan. Petech thinks that the port of the kingdom of Tu-Yüan stood at the mouth of the Mekong. His other identifications are also interesting. Thus I-lu-mo is placed in the Gulf of Siam, Sheng-li in the neighbourhood of Rajpuri or Patani and the twin kingdoms of Fu-kan and Tu-lu on the opposite shore of the Malay Peninsula.²⁶ Wang Gungwu identifies them slightly differently. According to him, Sheng-li and Fu-kan-tu-lu (taken as one name) 'were ten days' journey from each other by land'. "Such a short land-route on the way from China to India brings to mind the narrow neck of the Malay Peninsula with Sheng-li on the east coast and Fu-kan-tu-lu on the west coast."²⁷ That the overland journey was across the Malay Peninsula has been accepted by Paul Wheatley who suggests two possible routes ; but he is at the same time aware of the fact that 'neither the northern nor the southern possible route has yielded archaeological evidence confirming its use as early as the first century B.C.'²⁸ In any case, it may be noted that the details of the outward journey does not contain anything to suggest that the Straits routes were used by the Han envoys. Nevertheless, Wang Gungwu believes that though the isthmus route was more attractive, the Straits routes were also not unknown. In support of this contention, he points out that the envoys of Wang Ming returned from Huang-chih in the period 1-5 A.D. 'via P'i-tsung, an island probably situated somewhere in the Straits'.²⁹ Ferrand locates it somewhere between Palembang and Malacca.³⁰ J. C. Lamster takes it to be situated near the Karimata Strait to the south

26 *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

27 *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

28 *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

29 *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

30 *Op. cit.*, pp. 38-50.

of the equator in Western Indonesia.³¹ Duyvendak identifies it with the P'i-sung island of the *Wu-pei-chih* chart which places it off the south-west coast of Johore.³² According to Wheatly, it is identical with P'i-sung of the *Sui-Shu* and was most probably situated in the Malay Peninsula or a neighbouring island.³³ Wolters thinks that it could lie outside the Malaya Peninsula, 'say an area inhabited by Malay-speaking Oranglaut on the Tenasserim coast'.³⁴ Petech points out the phonetic similarity between P'i-tsung and the Malayan word *pisang* which is borne by several islands of the Malay Archipelago.³⁵ One is also struck by the similarity of the name P'i-tsung with Besuṅga of the *Mahāniddesa* and Besynga of Ptolemy. It is thus possible to locate it in 'South-East Burma, i.e. more or less in the same region where Wolters has placed it. But the question then poses itself: Why did it take about eight months to reach from Huang-chih/Gaṅgā to a port in South-East Burma and afterwards only two months to arrive at the frontiers of Annam? Wheatley suggests that 'the times recorded for the various stages along the route sometimes included periods of waiting for the seasonal changes of the monsoon'.³⁶ As a matter of fact, the twice-yearly reversal of the wind direction compelled every ship not to sail for more than six months at a stretch in the same direction. It is likely that on the homeward journey, the envoys of Wang Ming started rather late in the season, from Huang-chih/Gaṅgā and were surprised by the onset of the north-eastern monsoon. So they were obliged to cast anchor at some safe haven off the Tenasserim coast till the next sailing season. In any case, as has been suggested by Wolters, the location of P'i-tsung in an extra-Malay Penisular

31 *Op. cit.*, pp. 991-98.

32 *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

33 *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

34 *Op. cit.*, p. 268, note 19.

35 *Op. cit.*, p. 300.

36 *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

region alone cannot establish that the return journey of the envoys of Wang Ming was effected by an all-sea route.³⁷

A close scrutiny of the *Han-Shu* passage also shows that in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era the Chinese did not set sail along the South China Sea (Nan-hai). In their trade with Huang-chih, the trading ships of the 'barbarians' transported them one after the other.³⁸ From the passage it appears that Chinese merchant navy was not developed even for coastal trading which could not then be handled only by the Chams, Fu-nanese and Malays. Wang Gungwu, however, translates the relevant portion somewhat differently: "The merchant ships of the barbarians are used to transfer them (the Chinese) to their destination."³⁹ Gungwu thus suggests that, in the first leg of the journey, Chinese ships were employed, and that a transfer was then effected to the barbarian, i.e. foreign, vessels on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. The foreign vessels, in that case, could belong to the Indians, Malays and Fu-nanese.

There is no direct evidence of maritime trade between India and China under the Hsin and Later Hans (25-220 A.D.). But we are told that tribute missions reached China by sea from Yeh-t'iao in 132 A.D., from T'ien-chu in 159 and 161 A.D., and from Ta-ch'in in 166 A.D.⁴⁰ According to Fujita Toyohachi, Yeh-t'iao is a mistake for Ssu-t'iao or Ssu-ho-t'iao, i.e. Siha-dipa or Ceylon. The suggestion is interesting no doubt, but cannot be accepted without further corroboration. There is, however, no second opinion as to the identification of T'ien-chu (North India) and Ta-ch'in (Roman Orient). Evidently these missions, whether official or not, were motivated to gain favourable concessions from the Chinese emperors for the merchants of the respective country. Indeed

37 See note 34.

38 Pelliot, *loc. cit.*; Petech, *loc. cit.*

39 *Op. cit.*, pp. 20, 23.

40 Yeh-t'iao missions in *Hou Han-Shu*, 6, 6a; T'ien-tchou missions, *ibid.*, 118, 10a; and Ta Ch'in missions, *ibid.*, 118, 8a-9a.

archaeological excavations carried on at different places in the Malay Peninsula and Siam⁴¹ as also the more intimate knowledge of the countries of South-East Asia evinced by Ptolemy⁴² show that in the early centuries of the Christian era, Roman trade extended in countries beyond India, to Indo-China and from there to China. In this trade between the Roman Orient and India on the one hand and China on the other, Fu-nan appears to have played, right from the beginning, the rôle of the Major intermediary. At the risk of some exaggeration, it may be stated that the Fu-nanese rulers like their Śrīvijaya counterparts of Sumatra at a later period, tried to gain monopoly control of this trade by providing entrepôts and by carrying merchandise in their ships. Ptolemy mentions Kattigara as an emporium situated at the mouth of the river Cottiaris. Without doubt, the name of the port is derived from a Sanskrit word like Kīrti-nagara or Koṭṭa-nagara. Different identifications have been proposed for it. For example, Gérini located it at modern Hang-chou close by the mouth of the Song-ka river.^{42a} Schoff believed it to be identical with Chiao-chih, i.e. Tonkin :⁴³ Hermann thought it to be located near Saigon ;⁴⁴ according to Pierre Meile, it was somewhere in Kwangtung⁴⁵ while R. Stein is in favour

41 Cf. Coedes, *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. XXI, No. 3, pp. 195-200 ; C. Picard, *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 137-49 ; H. G. Q. Wales, *Indian Art and Letters*, Vol. IX, pp. 1-35 ; *JMBRAS*, Vol. XVII, Pts. 1 and 2, pp. 1-85 ; *ibid.*, Vol. XX, Pt. 1, pp. 1-11.

42 Orthodox opinion is that Ptolemy wrote his *Geography* in the middle of the second century A.D. The recent trend is to discover different strata of additions and accretions to the original work of Ptolemy. For a fuller discussion, see L. Bagrow, *Geografiska Annaler*, Vol. XXVII, Nos. 3-4, pp. 318-87 ; see also Wheatley, *op. cit.*, pp. 138, 162.

42a Gérini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, Monograph of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 1 (1909), pp. 302-04. For the different identifications proposed for Kattigara till the publication of the Monograph, see p. 303, note 1.

43 *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 244.

44 *Proceedings of International Congress of Geography*, Amsterdam Session, pp. 123-28.

45 *Journal Asiatique*, 1940, p. 85.



of placing it in the neighbourhood of Cape St. Jacques near Saigon. He further believes it to be the same as K'iu-tou-kien (or °kan) of the Chinese.⁴⁶ Coedes upholds the opinion of Stein regarding its location in Cochin-China.⁴⁷ In the wake of archaeological discoveries at Oc-Eo to the south of Phnom Bathe in the trans-Bassac region of Cochin-China, D. Mallaret has also confirmed this view.⁴⁸ Coedes has further described Oc-Eo as a port of Fu-nan.⁴⁹ It is now pretty certain that the remains of Oc-Eo represent what had once been the Kattigara emporium. Numerous beads of rock crystal, carnelian, onyx, amethyst, etc., and hundreds of intaglios and cameos in carnelian, rock-crystal and sardonyx have been found at Oc-Eo. Remarkable also is the discovery of a gold medal of the Roman emperor Antonius Pius, of 152 A.D. It may be recalled that Roman pottery, glass, and real and false gems dating from the first half of the first century A.D. have been discovered by R. E. M. Wheeler at Virapatnam.⁵⁰ It is therefore apparent that Graeco-Roman and Indian goods were brought to Indo-China from emporia lying on the other coast of the Bay of Bengal in South-Eastern India for re-export to China, though part of the merchandise might have been locally consumed by the nobility. In any case, Kattigara/Oc-Eo was the terminus of all navigation from the direction of the Eastern Mediterranean. The growing importance of this trade can be assessed from the dispatch of the tribute missions referred to above. The Fu-nanese rulers were not slow to perceive it. That is why they now made a determined effort to gain control of the entire route through which this trade passed, beginning from the Isthmus of Malay. Thus the *Liang-Shu* tells us that, in the beginning

46 'Lelin-yi', *Bulletin du centre d'études sinologiques de Pékin*, Vol. II, Pts. 1-3.

47 *Les états hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* (new ed., 1964), p. 64.

48 *L'Archéologie du delta du Mékong*, Vol. III, pp. 421-54.

49 *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. X, p. 196.

50 *Ancient India*, No. 2, pp. 17, 101-02.

of the third century A.D., the Fu-nanese king Fan-che-man 'chartered the Great Sea (which can mean only the Gulf of Siam) in great ships and conquered more than ten kingdoms'.⁵¹ These could very well comprise Tāmbraliṅga, Takkola and Kaṭāha of early Indian literature. The empire of Fan-che-man appears to have included also the Lower Mekong and Tonle Sap, possibly Campā. i.e. Lin-yi of the Chinese or rather the coastal strip from the Mekong-Donhai delta to Cam Ranh Bay. According to the *Liang-Shu*,⁵² five kingdoms of Tun-hsūn acknowledged the suzerainty of Fu-nan. These kingdoms are thus described in this text: "The eastern frontier of Tun Sun is in communication with Chiao-chih (Tonkin), the western with T'ien-chu (Northern India) and An-hsi (Parthia)." Since it lay on the conventional maritime trade route, the *Liang-Shu* further adds that ships in the South China Sea could not afford to pass the port without halting there.⁵³ Wolters advanced three reasons to regard this statement as valid for the third century A.D.⁵⁴ According to Gungwu, the port of Tun-Sun at least was on the eastern coast. It is reassuring that archaeological corroboration of the Fu-nanese presence in the Lower Menam valley has been recently found.⁵⁵

So far the incentive to develop this trade was not felt much by the Chinese emperors who were in control of the great Central Asiatic overland route. But after the fall of the Later Hans (220 A.D.), China to the south of the Yangtse came under the possession of the Wu (222-80 A.D.) who thus found themselves cut off from the centres of wealth lying in the North, then controlled by the Wei, while the Shus were masters of the overland route to India through Yünnan and Burma. Hence the Wu emperors, and for the matter of that, all the subsequent imperial families of

51 54, 4a.

52 54, 7a.

53 54, 3b.

54 *Op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

55 *Arts Asiatiques*, Vol. XII, p. 144.



South China, had to depend on maritime trade for the supply of western luxury goods. This state of things continued till 589 A.D. when the Sui dynasty unified once again North and South China. It seems that the opportunity provided by the new situation was fully utilized by the Fu-nanese rulers. Thus, according to one version of the Wu-li, the first Fu-nanese mission to China bringing glassware was sent in 225 A.D.⁵⁶ Soon afterwards between 226 and 231 A.D., Lü Tai, the Governor of Chiao-chih, sent a *ts'ung-shih* with the ostensible purpose of spreading to the South the civilization of the Heavenly Kingdom, but in fact, to study trade prospects. In the wake of this embassy and before 231 A.D. tribute missions went to China from Fu-nan, Lin-yi and T'ang-Ming.⁵⁷ A more detailed account of a Chinese embassy to Fu-nan is available. The first Wu ruler, viz. Sun Chuan (222-82 A.D.), sent a *ts'ung-shih* named Chu-ying along with Kang-T'ai to Fu-nan. This mission may be different from the one sent by Lü Tai and may have taken place in the reign of Fan-sum, i.e. after 240 A.D. This 'second' mission is better known.⁵⁸ Kang T'ai must have been a shrewd commercial observer and the embassy apparently devoted itself to the study of the handling of the West Asiatic trade. Gungwu believes that an additional motive of the embassy was perhaps to ascertain the wisdom or otherwise of annexing the entire coast land of Annam right upto Fu-nan with a view to safeguarding this trade interest.⁵⁹ On their arrival in Fu-nan, the Chinese envoys met Ch'en Sung, the envoy of the Murunda king of India, who had accompanied prince Su-Wu on his return journey to Fu-nan and brought with him four Yüeh-chi horses. The full story of Fu-nanese contact with India is

56 Pelliot, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

57 Gungwu, *op. cit.*, p. 32 (see references to Chinese texts here).

58 The original Report (or Memoirs) of Kang T'ai is lost; but passages from it are quoted and assimilated in later Chinese texts. For the voluminous literature which has thus grown up, see Gungwu, *op. cit.*, p. 33, note 10.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

described in the *Liang-Shu*, evidently after Kang T'ai. According to it, one Kia-siang-li, a native of Tan-yang (possibly situated to the west of India) had earlier visited India and from there went to Fu-nan. King Fan-chan heard from him of the riches of India and was impressed. Kia-siang-li told him that it took three or four years to go to and come back from India. Fan-chan sent one of his relatives, prince Su-Wu, to India. When Su-Wu returned to Fu-nan, Fan-chan was no longer ruling and Fan Sun was on the throne. The itinerary of Su-Wu is given below :

"Starting from Fu-nan and going to the port of Chū-li and then following the sea into the great bay entering north-west directly into it, and after passing several countries along the bay, after more than a year [one] arrives at the mouth of the Ganges."⁶⁰

In place of 'going to the port of Chū-li' some scholars prefer to read 'Tou-chū-li' as one word and find here a reference to Takkolā of the *Milindapañha* and the Takola emporium of Ptolemy, identified with modern Takua-pa on the western coast of the Isthmus of Kra.⁶¹ According to Wheatley⁶² and Wolters,⁶³ Chū-li which was a little to the south of the Tun-Sun entrepôt lay somewhere on the Isthmus. Gungwu, on the other hand, locates it in the Southern Malay Peninsula and is in favour of identifying it with Coli of Ptolemy where ships waited for the change of monsoon.⁶⁴ This, again, he believes, would explain the inordinate delay of more than a year in reaching the mouth of the Ganges. This identification cannot be accepted for the simple reason that while Kang T'ai mentions explicitly the seasonal wind and the monsoon for voyage between Chia-na-t'iao (Gaṇadvīpa, possibly Kanthi

60 54, 10a ; trans. Gungwu, *loc. cit.*

61 S. Lévi, *Etudes Asiatiques*, Vol. II, p. 26.

62 *Op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.

63 *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

64 *Op. cit.*, p. 43. For different identifications proposed for Coli, see Wheatley, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-53.

of Ptolemy and Kanthaka in the Gulf of Cutch)⁶⁵ and Ta-ch'in, nothing is stated of the monsoons and currents in the Eastern Ocean. Wolters thinks that the 'great bay' and 'several countries' mentioned in the itinerary stood respectively for the Gulf of Martaban and the early Môn settlements where the ships stopped for trade, thereby explaining the delay. Had it been possible to locate either Coli of Ptolemy or Chū-li (or °chi) of the Chinese texts in the Straits region, the contention of Gungwu, Coedes and K. A. N. Sastri regarding the operational character of the Straits of Malacca in the first half of the third century A.D. could have been accepted.⁶⁶ The same conclusion may be drawn from certain incidental notices made by Kang T'ai. Among important trading centres he mentions Ssu-t'iao and Ko-ying. Of these, Ssu-t'iao has been equated with Java ; but Ko-ying has not yet been satisfactorily located. If it is taken to have been situated in the eastern coast of Sumatra, its foreign trade must have passed through the Straits of Malacca. This, to say the least, is problematic and in that case, the route must have remained extremely restricted since there is no indication of any direct trade between Ko-ying and Ssu-t'iao on the one hand and India or China on the other. If any such trade existed at all, it had to pass through the ports of Fu-nan and her dependencies like Chū-li, Tun-Sun, etc. Indeed, with regard to Sino-Indian trade, Kang T'ai mentions clearly that 'the Chang-hai (the South China Sea) is of great extent and ocean-going junks have not yet crossed it direct'.⁶⁷ This statement proves definitively that the Straits routes were not opened up for general use at least in the first half of the third century A.D.

65 The identification was suggested to Wolters by B. N. Mukherji, vide *Early Indonesian Commerce*, p. 272, note 73. Petech is inclined to locate it in South East Asia (*Northern India*, p. 53). See also A. Christie, in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. XIX, Pt. 2, p. 347, for other suggestions.

66 *Les états*, etc., p. 83 ; K. A. N. Sastri, *The Colas*, 2nd ed., p. 85.

67 T'ai P'ing Yü Lan, 787, 3845a ; trans. Gungwu, *loc. cit.*

The Chinese ships,⁶⁸ i.e. the ships of the Sinicized Yüehs, could at best sail upto Tun-Sun. In the prevailing condition of sailing, there can be no question of any voyaging along the Gulf of Siam or the South China Sea. Yet an elaborate account of shipping is given. Hence by virtue of being the dominant political power in the region, most of these ships belonged to Fu-nan. The merchandise consisted of *gharu* wood, various scents and perfumes, coral trees, ivory, rhinoceros horns, pearls, glass and rare stones. Possibly slaves were also imported from K'un-lun. The intensity of this trade may be realized from the more frequent embassies sent to China by Fu-nan (in 243, 285, 286 and 287 A.D.). Two tribute missions also came to China by way of the sea from Ta-ch'in in 226 and 284 A.D.

68 These ships are called *po* by the Chinese, which may be of Tamil origin (cf. such words as *padagu*, *padao*, *parao*, etc., used for ship or a kind of ship on the Malabar coast). The Malay word *parahu* may also have a similar origin. It is interesting to note that in connexion with ships, the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Sec. 60) mentions the following: "But those which make the voyage to Chryse (i.e. the Malay Peninsula) and to the Ganges are called *colandia* and are very large." Schoff has taken the word *colandia* to be of Malayan origin (p. 246); but R. L. Mitra regards *kolandia-phonta* as a transcription of Sanskrit *kolāntarapota*, 'ships for going to foreign shores' (*Antiquities of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 115). Coedes takes *colandia* as derived from Sanskrit *kolam* or *kulam*. He points out that the Tep Prañam inscription of the Cambodian king Yaśovarman uses the term *kaula* to mean a particular type of boat (*Textes des auteurs grecs et latins relatifs à l'Extreme-Orient*, p. xvii, note 1). Hornell thinks that *kullān* and *kullā*, the original of the first element of *colandia-phonta*, are Tamil words (*The Origins and Ethnological Significance of Indian Boat Designs*, p. 215). Pierre Meile believes that the original was *kalam* which he takes to be a Tamil word (*op. cit.*, pp. 90-92). Stein suggests the equation: *kolandia-phonta*=*K'ouen-louen-tan* and thinks that it was used in chartering the high seas (*op. cit.*, p. 67). According to Christie, *kolandia-phonta* 'originally represented some compound of the general order as *k'un-lun-po*' and the latter means *po* of the geographical area called Ku'n-lun. Furthermore, he thinks it 'appropriate to postulate for *po* a South-East Asian original of the order labial-vowel-velar/stop' (*op. cit.*, pp. 345-53). [The Sanskrit word for 'shore' is *kūla*, not *kola* which, however, means 'a raft'.—Ed.]

This trade languished in the fourth century A.D. as a result of political troubles in China. Little is also known of Fu-nan during this period. Hence it is not quite correct to speak of political trouble in Fu-nan as resulting in the transfer of this trade further south to Sumatra, Java or the west coast of Borneo, as has been held by Gungwu.⁶⁹ It is, however, true that an unsuccessful mission was sent to China by Tchan-tan (Candana) in 367 A.D. There is also little justification for the assertion that the rise of Yeh-po-t'iao (Yavadvīpa, a Java-like name) and the more intimate knowledge of the monsoons and ocean currents of the South China Sea were other factors contributing to the eclipse of Fu-nanese commerce in this period.⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, these developments began to take place early in the fifth century A.D. The account of Fa-hsien is enough to convince that direct sailing along the South China Sea to the Bay of Bengal commenced only recently, but was as yet regarded as dangerous because of the depredations of the pirates and ravages by storms. Gungwu, following Briggs, believes that, as a result of these, the trade shifted still further south through the Sunda Straits and along the west coast of Sumatra. But at the same time he thinks that part of this trade was re-diverted to the Isthmus of Malaya Peninsula, and so Fu-nan was flourishing once again.⁷¹ It may, however, be noted that only four tribute missions (in 434, 435, 438 and 484 A.D.) from Fu-nan to China are recorded. If in spite of the re-routing of Indian and Western trade along the Isthmus, Fu-nan could not take much benefit out of it, the reason is to be sought in the unequal competition she faced from her newly independent vassal States in the Malaya Peninsula. Thus P'an-P'an sent two embassies to China independently of Fu-nan, one in 455 A.D. and the other during the period 457-64 A.D. However, much lost ground was retrieved by Fu-nan under its ruler

69 *Op. cit.*, p. 42.

70 *Loc. cit.*

71 *Ibid.*, p. 56 ; L. P. Briggs, *Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 23.

Rudravarman in the first half of the sixth century A. D. This is borne out by the good number of embassies sent to China during the period (in 512, 514, 517, 519, 520, 530, 535 and 539 A. D.). The commercial recovery of Fu-nan is also confirmed by archaeological evidence. Thus, according to Mallaret, the latter half of the fifth and the first half of the sixth century A. D. constituted a period of brisk activity at the port of Oc-Eo.⁷² But this prosperity proved to be ephemeral. The political pressure exerted by the Khmer could have been withstood by the Funanese rulers; but a fatal blow was struck at the source of their power, i.e. maritime commerce. Apart from the competition offered by the former vassal States like P'an P'an, Tan Tan and Hang-ya-hsiu, the opening up of the Straits routes and the emergence of independent States south of the Straits of Malacca on the coast of South-Eastern Sumatra and Northern Java which had begun as early as the middle of the fifth century A.D.⁷³ spelt doom to Fu-nan which no longer lay on the highway of maritime trade between the East and West.

72 Mallaret, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-13.

73 Wolters, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-72.

XIII

INDUSTRIAL PROFESSIONS IN THE
PĀLI JĀTAKAS*

Asim Kumar Chatterjee, Centre of Advanced Study
in AIHC, Calcutta University

The Pāli Jātakas, most of which were compiled in the pre-Christian days,** throw a flood of light on almost every aspect of life and culture of ancient India. They not only give a very sincere and honest account of the everyday life of the people of those days, but also of their various vocations. We have references to people of almost all professions. Among the professional classes which have been repeatedly mentioned in the Jātaka stories, the most important are the carpenter, blacksmith, weaver, goldsmith, ivory-worker and sculptor. Besides these six, we have references to ship-builders, basket-makers, stone-cutters, etc.

The importance of the profession of the carpenter can hardly be overemphasised. Unlike the modern carpenters, they were required to construct houses for all classes of people. According to Arrian,¹ most of the houses of ancient India were built of wood, but those² in cities which stood on commanding situations and lofty eminences were built of brick and mud. The Jātakas also speak of houses built of both wood and mud and brick. But there is little doubt that houses built of wood were preferred. In the *Alīnacitta Jātaka* (No. 156),³ we have an interesting picture of the life led by the carpenters. We are told that everyday they would go to the river in a vessel and enter the forest where they would shape

*[The revised copy of the paper was received on 12.8.72.—Ed.]

**[This is not quite correct. See Winternitz, *HIL*, Vol. II, pp. 120-23, 156.—Ed.]

1 See R. C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, p. 223.

2 *Op. cit.*, p. 224.

3 See Cowell, *Jātaka Stories*, Vol. II, p. 14.

beams and planks for housebuilding and put together the framework of one-storey and two-storey houses, numbering all the pieces from the mainpost onwards ; these then they brought down to the river-bank and put them all aboard. Then rowing downstream again, they would build to order as it was required of them : after which when they received their fee, they went back again for materials for the building. It would be seen from this account that carpenters had also to do the work of wood-cutters although the Classical writers⁴ have mentioned them separately. In the *Kulāvaka Jātaka* (No 31),⁵ we have an account of the building of a hall of wood where the carpenters, we are told, had some pinnacle-wood dried, and then fashioned and bored it and made it into a finished pinnacle. We further learn from the same work that it was the custom to put on the pinnacle after the building was finished. From this story we also learn that it was only from the wood which had been cut some time ago and dried and hardened in the sun that a pinnacle could be built. The pinnacle made of fresh or green wood was considered unsuitable and dangerous. Two verses in the *Kukku Jātaka* (No. 396) speak of a perfectly-built structure as follows :

“The peak’s a cubit and half in height,
Eight spans will compass it into circuit round,
Of *Simśapā* and *Sāra* built aright
Why does it stand so sound ?
The thirty rafters bent, of *Sāra* wood,
Set equally, encompass it around,
They press it tightly, for their hold is good,
’Tis set aright and sound.”⁶

The *Bhaddasāla Jātaka* (No. 465)⁷ speaks of a king who expresses his desire to live in a palace built of a single *sāla*

4 See Strabo’s *Geography*, Book XV. 50, in Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

5 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 79.

6 *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 197 ; for the original Pāli verses see J. Kasyap, *Jātakapāli* (Nalanda Pāli Texts series), Vol. I, p. 146.

7 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 96.

column. Such royal palaces built of a single column is also referred to in the *Kusanāli Jātaka* (No. 121).⁸ It is needless to say that such one-column palaces could only be built by master carpenters, and in ancient India, there was no dearth of such skilled artificers. The carpenter class usually lived in villages exclusively meant for them and those lay not far from the main town.⁹ That the ancient Indian wooden buildings had few parallels in the world is attested to by Strabo¹⁰ and Aelian.¹¹ Even the massive wall surrounding Palibothra (Pāṭaliputra), says Strabo, was built of wood.¹² References to 1000-columned and seven-storeyed palaces (*Jātaka* Nos. 62, 489, 514, 543) show that ancient Indian carpenters were skilled in building sophisticated and complex buildings.* The houses of ordinary and poor persons were sometimes built of mud and bamboo poles as suggested by the *Cūla Nandiya Jātaka* (No. 222).¹³

The *Guṇa Jātaka* (No. 157)¹⁴ suggests that bits of cotton were sometimes mixed with clay which was used by monks as mortar. Frequent references to stone-columns and stone benches indirectly prove the importance of the profession of masons. The *Javana-Haṃsa Jātaka* (No 479)¹⁵ refers to a stone-column with a bell over it. Such columns have actually been found from various parts of India.¹⁶

Even persons belonging to respectable castes did not hesitate to embrace the carpenter's profession. The *Phandana*

8 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 267.

9 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 14.

10 See Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 414-15.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 262.

*[In *JAIH*, Vol. V, p. 387, it is said that the architectural science in ancient India was not so developed as to build an eight-storey building. The construction of such buildings in wood, however, was not very difficult. For a one-pillar building, see *Mbh.*, I. 42.29.—Ed.]

13 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 142.

14 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 18.

15 *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 134.

16 See Marshall in *CHI*, Vol. I, p. 619.

Jātaka (No. 475)¹⁷ mentions a Brāhmaṇa carpenter belonging the Bhāradvāja-gotra. However in ancient India, the Brāhmaṇas were sometimes compelled to do less respectable jobs. The *Pañcatantra*¹⁸ has a story about a Brāhmaṇa farmer called Haridatta. A number of such Brāhmaṇa agriculturalists are mentioned in the Jātaka stories,

After the carpenter's, the most important profession was the blacksmith's. In the *Sūci Jātaka*¹⁹ (No 387), there is an account of a blacksmith's proficiency in needle-making. According to this story the Bodhisattva, who was born in a village as a blacksmith, once visited another blacksmiths' village. To test his proficiency, the headsmith of that village assembled all the smiths and then asked the Bodhisattva to show his needle to all. The Bodhisattva then asked the headsmith to have an anvil brought and a bronze dish full of water. When that was done, he took the needle-tube from the wrapper and gave it to the headsmith. The latter asked whether that was the needle. The Bodhisattva replied in the negative and said that it was the sheath. The headsmith could neither see its end nor its tip. The Bodhisattva drew off the covering with his nail and put the inner thing at the master's hand. Again when the master asked whether that was the needle, the Bodhisattva answered in the negative and said that it was another needle-sheath. Then he took off the covering with his nail and, after repeating that function for six times, handed over the real needle to the headsmith. Then the headsmith asked the Bodhisattva about the strength of his needle. The Bodhisattva requested the master to have the anvil raised up by a strong man and a water-vessel set under that anvil. He then struck the needle by the point into the anvil. The needle pierced the anvil and lay on the surface of the water.

The above story contains an air of exaggeration ; but it shows the high degree of sophistication attained by the

17 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 133.

18 Ed. K. P. Parab, III.5.

19 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 179-80.

blacksmiths of those days in India. The popularity of Indian steel is attested to by the Classical writers including the unknown author of the *Periplus*.²⁰ Even as late a writer as Edrisi observes, "The Hindus excel in the manufacture of iron. They have also workshops wherein are forged the most famous sabres in the world. It is impossible to find anything to surpass the edge that you get from Indian steel."²¹ Schoff conjectures that the 'excellent iron of Seres' mentioned by Pliny is really the Indian steel.²² The famous iron pillar of Delhi* is the most triumphant and living testimony to the high degree of excellence attained by smiths in ancient India.

The profession of weavers was not very happy in ancient India. The *Bhīmasena Jātaka*²³ (No. 80), says, 'weaving is a sorry profession'. There is reason to believe that poor weavers were victims of unscrupulous businessmen who probably carried on a monopoly trade. The *Periplus*²⁴ has nothing but praise for the Indian cloth and there is little doubt that India earned a lot of foreign money by exporting her wonderful cotton products. Arrian,²⁵ too, has high praise for the Indian cotton cloth. But it is extremely doubtful whether the poor weavers of Varanasi or Bengal got even a small percentage of the foreign money earned by the traders.

According to Kauṭilya,²⁶ the fee for spinning a certain amount of thread was equal to the original price of the thread (*sūtra-mūlyam vāna-vetanam*).^{*} But the same authority enjoins

20 See W. H. Schoff's trans., p. 24 ; also pp. 70-71, 171-72.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 172.

*[It is at Mehrauli near Delhi.—Ed.]

23 See Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 204.

24 See Schoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 47, 256-58.

25 See Majumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.

26 Pandit Puskalay ed., p. 355. Shamasastri has made some confusion here (trans., p. 227) ; see R. P. Kangle's *The Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, Part II, p. 295. [Shamasastri's translation is all right, because his text is *sūtra-mūlyam vā na vetanam* without a full-stop before the passage.—Ed.]

that the weavers should increase the weight of the threads [supplied to them for weaving cloth] in the proportion of 10 to 11 by soaking the threads in rice-gruel. It appears from Kauṭilya²⁷ that most weavers in ancient India were females.

The goldsmiths were less unfortunate than the weavers probably because they found a ready market in their own localities and also because of the habit of the ancient Indians, irrespective of sex, to wear various ornaments on different parts of their body. The practice of wearing ornaments in India goes back to the days of Mohenjodaro, if not earlier. A very good number of R̥gvedic passages speak of golden and silver ornaments. Strabo observes that the Indians 'though shabby in every other way, are fond of adornment'.²⁸ Discoveries of highly complex and beautiful ornaments from Taxila and other old sites more than confirm the uniform literary tradition regarding the popularity of ornaments. It appears from the *Dhammaddhaja Jātaka*²⁹ (No. 220) that there were specialists for different types of ornaments; for it refers to a maker of ornaments for head only. We have sundry references in the Jātakas to jewelled images of gold.³⁰ Even the staircase leading to the high seat of the Master, according to the *Sūkara Jātaka*³¹ (No. 153), was profusely ornamented. We have a reference to 'jewelled fans in a casket of gold' in the *Mahāsilava Jātaka* (No. 51).³² Such references prove the high standard of workmanship attained by goldsmiths and jewellers in ancient India.

Ivory-carving was another art which was zealously cultivated in ancient India. It has been supposed that the Egyptian, Greek and Latin terms for ivory have all been derived from

27 See *Arthaśāstra*, Book II, Ch. 23.

28 See Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 259. The *Arthaśāstra*, Bk. II, Ch. XIII, gives much information about the ornament industry of ancient India.

29 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 135.

30 See Nos. 78, 378, 498, 536, etc.

31 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 7.

32 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 131.

the original Sanskrit name *ibha* meaning 'elephant'.³³ According to the *Periplus*, ivory was regularly exported from India to other countries.³⁴ The discovery of an ivory Yakṣiṇī figurine of the first century A.D. from Pompeii proves the great popularity of ivory objects of India in the Roman empire.³⁵ The earliest epigraphic reference to ivory workers (*dantakāra*) is that found on the Sanchi Gates.³⁶ The *Sīlavanāga Jātaka* (No. 72)³⁷ refers to ivory workers' bazar and the *Kāsava Jātaka* (No. 221)³⁸ to the ivory workers of Varanasi who used to make bangles and ivory trinkets. The *Kusa Jātaka* (No. 531)³⁹ refers to the ivory handle of a glass.

There is little doubt that objects made of ivory were eagerly bought by the persons belonging to the rich Nāgaraka class. It is also permissible to conjecture that ivory-work being a highly specialized job could only be done by a select few who naturally enjoyed more prosperity than other types of workers. The Sanchi inscription, referred to above, shows that the ivory workers of Vidiśā enjoyed some measure of affluence. But even in this case, we cannot rule out the possibility of exploitation by the middlemen or traders.

The Jātakas often refer to golden images.⁴⁰ The practice of image-making goes back to the days of the Harppan civilization. Patañjali's⁴¹ reference to images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha being fashioned during the Maurya period, show that cult images were popular in the third century B.C. It is surprising that the Jātakas refer to images or golden images, but not particularly to images of any Brāhmaṇical deity, although they

33 See Schoff, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 45.

35 See *Age of Imperial Unity* (ed. Majumdar), p. 541.

36 See *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. II, p. 378.

37 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 176.

38 *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 139.

39 *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 158.

40 Nos. 78, 310, 458, 478, 531, 546.

41 V. 3.99 (on Pāṇini); see also J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography* (2nd ed.), pp. 39-40.

mention Brāhmaṇical gods like Indra, Vaiśravaṇa, Agni (Jātavedas) and Brahman.

The shipbuilding industry is quite old in India. Both the R̥gvedic and Harappan peoples knew the art of shipbuilding. Arrian⁴² included the shipbuilders among the fourth caste consisting of handicraftsmen and retail-dealers. The *Saṅkha Jātaka* (No. 442)⁴³ speaks of a big ship with 3 masts and the *Suppāraka Jātaka* (No. 463)⁴⁴ of a ship which could carry as many as 700 sailors.⁴⁵ The ship-builders of ancient India could be compared favourably with their counterparts in Rome or Alexandria. As an old maritime nation, it is but natural that this industry should be in a healthy and flourishing condition in the days of the compilation of the Jātaka stories.

There are direct and indirect references to a few cottage industries in the Jātakas. The *Maccha Jātaka* (No. 75)⁴⁶ mentions a casket of sandal wood and Jātaka No. 539 a 7-stringed lute. The *Setaketu Jātaka*⁴⁷ speaks of a book with brilliant coloured wrapping. Mention may be made, in this connection, of a story in the *Pañcatantra*⁴⁸ indicating that the price of a book could be as high as 100 silver pieces (*tat-sūnunā rūpaka-śatena vikrīyamānaṃ pustakaṃ gṛhītam*). Vāstyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*⁴⁹ suggests that the Nāgarakas used to keep a few books in their drawing-rooms along with musical instruments and other things of luxury.⁵⁰

42 See Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 225. The author of the *Periplus* mentions two types of long Indian boats called *Trappaga* and *Cotymba* (see para. 44).

43 Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 12.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

45 We do not rule out the possibility of '700' being a traditional number.

46 *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 184.

47 No. 377 ; Cowell, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 155.

48 II. 4.

49 See B. N. Basu's trans., p. 48.

50 The Jātakas mention other professional classes like stone-cutters (No. 137), basket-makers (No. 257), etc.

XIV

SOME ARABIC TALES ON INDIAN TRADE*

Ramesh Kumar Billorey, Centre of Advanced Study
in AIHC, Calcutta University

In some Arabic tales we find references to Indian trade, both inland and foreign—especially sea trade, India's trade relations with other countries including Arabia, important ports and market towns, chief articles of import and export, the activities of the pirates, trade in slaves, etc. Though the stories of 'Sindbad, the Sailor' and 'Prince Ahmad and Fairy Paribanou', like other tales of the *Arabian Nights*,¹ are full of fantastic elements, at least the passages cited below, relating to the trade activities in India, appear to be based more on fact than fiction.

The oceanic trade² was shared by the Persians, Indians, Indonesians and Ceylonese from early times. With the coming of Islam, we find the Arabs replacing the Persians and pushing the limits of their economic influence slowly and gradually towards the east.** The occupation of Sind by the Arabs brought India and the Muslim world closer to one another. During the reigns of Al-Mansur (754-75 A.D.) and Harun-ar-Rashid (786-809 A.D.), there was much direct intercourse with India. Under the latter ruler, the contact between the two regions became closer still.***

The narrative of Sindbad's adventures was added, along with other current stories, in the 9th century version of the

*[The paper was received in August, 1972.—Ed.]

1 Cf. *Arabian Nights*, published in the Bancroft Classics, 1969, pp. 22, 42, 43, 45, 48, 49, 52, 53, 58, 61, 64, 65-67, 68 ; also cf. Burton's translation of the *Nights*. Vol. IV, pp. 373, 386, 395, 396, 404, 417-20, ; Vol. VII, p. 16 ; Vol. X, pp. 246-48.

2 Lallanji Gopal, *The Economic History of Northern India*, 1st ed., pp. 112, 119. [Read *Life for History* in the title.—Ed.]

**[It is well known that the Arabs had enormous trade relations with India and some other countries long before the rise of Islam.—Ed.]

*** [There was much direct contact even earlier.—Ed.]

Arabian Nights.³ It was borrowed from the travellers' tales of an immense variety and extracts from Al-Adrisi, Al Kazwini and Abu Al-Vardi.⁴ Some information may also have been derived from 'Ajaib al-Hind' (Marvels of India) and 'Two Mohammedan Travellers', both works belonging to 9th century.⁵

References to Balsora occur frequently in the accounts of the great merchant from Bagdad. Sindbad says, "I. joined the company of merchants who traded by sea, embarked with them at Balsora in a ship we set sail and took our course toward the East Indies....." On other occasions also, it was at Balsora that he used to embark in a ship to sail for distant ports and when he returned, it was at this very place that he arrived before reaching Bagdad. The manner of description would suggest that Balsora was probably Basra which was known to be the western terminus for Indian ships in the 7th century.⁶

Describing his third voyage, Sindbad says, "We ceased not to buy and sell at several islands till we reached the land of Hind, where we bought cloves and ginger and various spices, and then we fared to the land of Sind where also we bought and sold." It is clear from Sindbad's statement that traders from other countries also joined him in his mercantile mission. He says, "..... as I did not intend carrying enough goods for a full cargo, I invited several merchants of different nations to join me".

His fifth adventure on the sea is narrated thus : "We sailed first to the island where pepper grows, then to Comari⁷ where the best aloe wood is found..... Here I exchanged my nuts for pepper and good aloe wood and went fishing for pearls and my divers were so lucky that very soon I had an

3 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXII, p. 158 ; also Vol. XX, p. 707.

4 Cf. Burton, *op. cit.*, Vol. VIII, p. 138.

5 Cf. *loc. cit.*

6 Lallanji Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 143, 152.

7 This is Cape Comorin (D. C. Sircar, *Cosmography and Geography in Early Indian Literature*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 118).

immense number and those very large and perfect. With all these treasures, I came joyfully back to Bagdad, where I disposed of them for large sums of money."

As we read in the popular stories of the period, it was the usual custom for a merchant to approach the king of another State or Kingdom with valuable offerings in order to secure his permission to do business. The accounts of Sindbad's sixth and seventh voyages record the exchange of letters and gifts between Harun ar-Rashid and the king of Al-Hind which furthered Indo-Arab trade relations. The king of Al-Hind entrusted Sindbad with a royal present and a letter to be delivered to Caliph Harun ar-Rashid. The present consisted of a beautiful vase carved out of a single ruby, a huge snake skin... which would preserve from sickness those who slept upon it, aloe wood, camphor, pistachio nuts and, lastly, a beautiful slave girl. The Caliph reciprocated by sending a letter and gifts for the Indian king for the delivery of which Sindbad had to undertake his seventh voyage. The gifts consisted of a bed with complete hangings of cloth of gold which cost a thousand sequins,* and another like it but of crimson stuff, fifty robes of rich embroidery, a hundred of the finest white linen from Cairo, Suez and Alexandria, then more beds of different fashions, and an agate vase carved with the figure of a man aiming an arrow at a lion : and, finally, a costly table, which had once belonged to king Solomon." We also find reference to hunting of elephants for their tusks and to an annual fair where the merchants came from various quarters to buy ivory. Concluding the tale of his last voyage, Sindbad says, "So I stayed with him till the time of the monsoon and every day we added to our store of ivory till all his ware houses were overflowing with it when the ships at last arrived, my master himself chose the one in which I was to sail and put on board for me a great store of choice provisions, also ivory in abundance and all the costliest curiosities of the country."

It is not easy to identify all the places mentioned by him. As for instance, in the account of his fourth voyage, Sindbad

*[Are they Venetian Sequins or Ducats issued from 1284 A.D. ?—Ed.]

refers to an island called Kala, 'hard by the land of Hind.' It produced excellent camphor and an abundance of Indian 'rattana'. He also noticed there a lead mine. In his first voyage, he refers to the island of Kassel and king Mihrage whose kingdom he visited and where he exchanged his merchandise for sandal and aloe wood, camphor, nutmegs, cloves, pepper, and ginger. In course of his second voyage, he visited the island of Roha where he saw the rhinoceros. His third voyage refers to the island of Salahat 'where sandal wood grows in great abundance'.

It is clear from the statements of Sindbad that sea voyage was by no means safe or comfortable in those days. Narrating his sixth voyage, Sindbad says, "Instead of going by the Persian Gulf, I travelled a considerable way overland and finally embarked from a distant Indian port with a captain who meant to make a long voyage. And truly he did so, for we fell in with stormy weather which drove us completely off our course, so for many days neither captain nor pilot knew where we were going." He had similar experience in his third voyage while in his fourth trip he suffered the most. "Being caught in a violent hurricane, our vessel became a total wreck... ..and many of our company perished in the waves, I with a few others had the good fortune to be washed ashore clinging to pieces of the wreck for the storm had driven us near an island....."

The perils of the sea were further added by the increasing activities of the pirates. Piracy and trade in slaves are referred to in the accounts of the last voyage of Sindbad's adventure. In his homeward voyage, Sindbad boarded a ship which 'sailed at once and for four days all went well'. "On the fifth day we had the misfortune to fall in with pirates who seized our vessel, killing all who resisted and making prisoners of those who were prudent enough to submit at once, of whom I was one. When they had despoiled us of all we possessed, they forced us to put on vile raiment and, sailing to a distant island, there sold us as slaves. I fell into the hands of a rich

merchant, who took me to house with him." Keeping in view the hazard of the sea, only those merchants who loved adventure and had enough courage to take risk for life could venture on such voyages which were undoubtedly highly rewarding.

In the story of 'Prince Ahmad and Fairy Paribanou', we find the description of an important Indian market town in which the merchants came not only from different parts of India, but also from countries like Persia, Egypt and China. "Prince Hussain, the eldest brother, arrived at Bisnagar, the capital of the kingdom of that name and the residence of its king. He lodged with a Khan appointed for foreign merchants. Having learnt that there were four principal sections where merchants of all sorts sold their commodities and kept shops and in the midst of which stood the king's palace, he went to one of the sections the next day. He could not but admire it. It was large and divided into several streets, all vaulted and shaded from the sun. the shops were of the same size, and all who dealt in the same sort of goods lived in one street, as did the handicraftsmen who kept their shops in the smaller streets. The multitude of shops, stocked with all sorts of merchandise, such as the finest linens from several parts of India, some painted with the most lively representations of beasts, trees and flowers, silks and brocades from Persia, China and other places, porcelain both from China and Japan, and tapestries and carpets displayed in the stores, surprised him so much that he knew not how to believe his own eyes ; but when he came to the goldsmiths and jewellers, he was in a kind of ecstasy to behold such prodigious quantities of wrought gold and silver and was dazzled by the lustre of the pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other jewels exposed for sale. He was not less astonished to see the Brāhmaṇas whose women-folk had bedecked themselves with the finest gems ; even their slave-boys and hand-maids wore fine dresses and ornaments such as golden necklaces, bracelets and bangles studded with precious stones. Another thing Prince Hussain particularly

admired was the great number of rose-sellers who crowded the streets, for the Indians are such great lovers of that flower not one will stir without a nosegay in his hand or a garland on his head, and the merchants keep them in pots in their shops so the air is perfectly perfumed.”* Burton has identified Bisnagar with Vijayanagara. If the identification is correct the story cannot be dated earlier than the 14th century. We also find stray references in the *Arabian Nights* to Indian scimitars, a polished lute of Indian craftsmanship and a dress of gold brocade, ‘embroidered with pearls and gems.....brought from Hind’.

The testimony of the tales cited above is corroborated by literary accounts, both indigenous and foreign, including those of the early Arab writers.⁸ It would appear that articles exported from India continued to remain the main attraction of the sea-trade of the period. A list of Indian exports as given in the *Wudud** al‘Alam* included perfumes like musk, aloe, amber and camphor, pearls of various varieties and sizes, diamonds, corals, and innumerable kinds of medicinal herbs. Ibn Khoradabah mentions diverse species of aloe wood, camphor and camphor-water, nutmeg, clove-pink, cubeb, coconut, vegetable stuff, textiles of velvety cotton and ivory as articles imported by India. According to Marco Polo, Indian merchants visiting Hormuz brought with them spices, precious stones, pearls, cloths of silk and gold, elephants’ tusks and so forth. Chau-Ju-Kua mentions fine swords and ‘tou-lo’ cotton stuff as the products of Pong-k’ie-lo (kingdom of Balhara).*** The lists of the exports of Tien-chu (India), according to some of the Chinese accounts, included rhinoceroses (horns), elephants and ivory, leopards (skin), tortoise-shells, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead and tin, sugarcane, pepper, ginger, sandal wood, gold

*[Rose became popular in India during Muslim rule ; so that the story belongs to the medieval period.—Ed.]

8 Lallanji Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-51.

**[Probably *Hudūd* is intended.—Ed.]

***[This is based on Wheatley’s restoration ; but Pong-k’ie-lo restored as ‘Bangalor’ is quite absurd.—Ed.]

embroidered rugs, white muslin, fur garments and diamond. According to Arab accounts, aloe wood, a variety of fine cotton fabrics and the horns of rhinoceroses were exported from Rahma which is identified with the Pāla kingdom. The evidence of these records as well as our tales would suggest that, except a few articles of daily use such as spices, most of the items of both import and export consisted of luxuries. The literary records also confirm the wide spread of piracy and a regular trade in slaves.⁹

Thus, making allowance for exaggerations which is quite natural in such tales, we get much interesting information regarding Indian trade of the early medieval period.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 129.

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ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

Page 5, line 14.—Read—so that

„ 8, line 23.—*Add Editorial Note—For fear of death from snake bite king Parikṣit is said to have been living in a palace built on one pillar (Mbh., I.42.29).*

„ 17, note 35.—*Read—Mahā-Ummagga*

„ 54, line 7.—*Read—supply*

„ „ line 20.—*Read—Pavitreṣṭi*

„ 83, line 5.—*Read—Raja Rammohanpur*

„ 95, line 24.—*Read—Devanṇabhaṭṭa*